

MMiR gets fat!
More pages & color

MILITARY Miniatures

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mastercon Madness!

Gonzo modeling in the heartland

Read
America's
favorite
Hobby
magazine
Then read this one



AA's massive T-28
super heavy tank



15cm Hetzer
conversion from
New Connection

He... He... said he
wanted my MMiR...

1/35th scale cars:
the DES SIMCAs plus the
battlin' Beetle from CMK

AFV Club's LVTP-5 Battlefield Bus

Jeep freaks beat feet:
the Skybow M38A1
and the Kirin Super Jeep

Back Stroke! Swimmin'
Schlepper: The RSO boat

How-to: link-to-link tracks
Part One: the players

Lauster Wargel:
big ass WW2 heavy tractor
Creating a 1/9 figure bust

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01 >



Plus a lot more really neato cool crap!

No. **19**

Miniatures

MILITARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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ON THE COVER:

A close-up look at Greg Chilar's giant Panther diorama seen at last year's MasterCon. Look for complete coverage of the show beginning on page 26.



From Your Editor



O.K., here we are at our first permanently fat issue. Does it seem heavier in your hands? It should. This heftier magazine also now comes at a heftier price. Some explanation is in order.

Over the last year or so, we have seen several critical areas of cost go up. UPS rates, for example, have gone up quite a bit, especially after the strike. Printing costs are also up, but don't ask us to explain that one (we're still waiting for someone to explain it to us). What all this means is that some type of price increase was inevitable. So I thought about this long and hard. What I came up with was that it would seem grossly unfair to raise the

price of the product and not give anything extra for it.

Now, I have always regarded MMiR as much more than just a magazine (I hope you do, too). What I mean by this is that it really isn't like other magazines starting right from its physical make-up. For instance, it's printed on heavy coated paper stock. This is the same stuff that you'll find books and brochures printed on. Most major magazines are printed on coated newsprint, which is a near cousin to what your daily newspaper is printed on.

Another distinguishing aspect is the way the magazine is laid out. We generally run the entire book sequentially, which means that all the articles run from beginning to end, with no "continued on..." page whatever. Because of this, the ads are interspersed more evenly and there really is no front or back in terms of where the good stuff is.

And speaking of ads, there have always been fewer ad pages as a percentage against what is run as editorial. More editorial and less ads has always been the rule.

So if we were to provide more MMiR for more money what form would that take? Well, consider bi-monthly. Six issues of MMiR has always been a popular request. I concluded it to be impractical for a couple of reasons. First is that the amount of work that goes into an issue of MMiR wouldn't really be possible if we had only four weeks to accomplish it. That's about as much time as we'd have left, if you subtracted time for printing and production. The average issue of MMiR contained about nine built and painted models. Ever built nine models in four weeks?

The other impracticality about bi-monthly is that we really could only provide pretty much the same product as before, albeit two more times a year. Four issues at \$6.95 was costing the reader \$27.80. A subscription, only the slightest of breaks at \$27.50.

I have always wanted to see the magazine as more of an event—more of a big deal. Because you have to wait a whole three months (or so) for it to come out, why not have it be more of a big deal?

And so I hit on the idea of an eighty page book with four times as much color. The price goes to \$9.95 per issue. Let's compare this a little. Four issues at the new rate sell (outside of a subscription) for \$39.80. Compared to six issues of the older format this would have been \$41.70. And remember, this would have been the same format each time. At this point, too, we can start to offer a better break on our subscriptions and this new figure is \$35.00. With our second class mail service, it's darn near as fast as first class. As a matter of fact, those of you with a first class subscription were paying almost as much for the older book (by the way: first class subscriptions have been discontinued as a result of all this).

The new format has a lot of really great attributes. This particular issue antes up a full fifteen features, 5 of them in full color! Also two additional features are offered in partial color. This has been accomplished with no overall increase in ad space. We now offer two new areas for color advertisers in both the front and back of the book (freeing up the color editorial section) and we also offer spot color in certain other areas of the book.

In addition to all this hectic stuff, we have also given certain areas of the book a new look, introducing color to the opening features and giving Mini-Men a minor make-over.

We are also aiming to create somewhat more exciting features and we'll soon bring back the popular diorama series. We have introduced the "Idea Bank" which is a forum for any and all to see, featuring a large list of kits that are still to be done. Another new feature is our Museums at Large, which showcases some of the world's most significant collections of real armored vehicles.

You'll notice the first of a series of "How-To" features. These are to familiarize you with some of the finer intricacies of armor building. The first of these is a tow-partner on link-to-link tracks. Part one gives a run-down on all the manufacturers and their various products while the second follows up with tips on building these little suckers. The next in the series should provoke a shudder: How-To Use waterslide decals!

And lastly, we are finally starting to see the result of some serious begging, with the addition of features by some of the more well-known (or is it notorious?) dudes in our little hobby.

So dig in and enjoy. As always, I appreciate your comments and criticisms. Feel free to drop me a line and let me know what you think of all this stuff.

How-To Private Ryan

As a follow-up to my Private Ryan editorial in issue number 17, I wanted to mention the coverage of the film in the British magazine *After the Battle*. Issue number 103 is almost entirely devoted to the film. There is a ton of fascinating inside information in the article. It covers the entire planning and production of the film.

This includes tales of some very tantalizing scenes that were left on the cutting room floor. One of these was briefly glimpsed in the film. This is when Hanks & Co. drive off the beach in a Jeep. This was originally part of a sequence which featured a line of destroyed German vehicles and a line of U.S. soft skins. There were also several shots which featured two Shermans (complete with wading trucks) fighting their way up the beach in the opening of the film. Let's hope they do a director's cut!

The rest of the article delves into the construction of the sets (the world's biggest diorama), the acquisition of the vehicles and the creation of the many special effects.

This is definitely something that you should check out. ATB products are available pretty much all over the place.

—Pat Stansell

Miniatures

MILITARY

IN REVIEW

Magazine Dude

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The Mail Sack

Cross-Eyed

In all the material I've read about WWII over the years, I have yet to find a paragraph describing the history or derivation of the Balkenkreuz.

Maybe some of MMiR's other readers share my ignorance or lack of opportunity to learn about this symbol or its historical antecedents. Care to enlighten us?

—Reed R. Treible

Well, it goes something like this: Before the beginning of WW2, the Germans didn't really have all that many tanks. They painted a "plus" sign on the sides of their tanks in the hope that the enemy would think that there was at least one more tank for every one they saw... Not buying that one? OK, how about this: The crosses were originally painted on rotated 90 degrees to appear as the letter "X." Other tanks were to be marked with the letter "O." This was due to the pre-war idea to replace the Schleiffen Plan with the tic-tac-toe plan. No? OK, then we give.

This is an intriguing question that is not answered in any of the popular books on German WW2 markings. It is interesting to note that the Swiss used a white cross on a red background as their national flag. A derivation of this is the Red Cross symbol which is the opposite of the Swiss flag. It would be interesting to know if any of this is linked together by history.

The original German armor marking of a solid white cross is identical to the Swiss one. It was only later that the center was painted out to make it less visible. Later in the war, the marking evolved into an outline surrounding a black center.

We would definitely be interested in any information about the origin of the marking. Any takers out there?



Loco Too

Talking about the Kriegslokomotiven Baureihe 52, "Loco Profile" seems to be an English publication which I have. (I am also a rail fan!) The photocopy is of the first and last pages of that publication.

The "Deutsche Kriegslokomotiven 1939-45" is a technical book (unfortunately for you guys, it is in German) and somewhat configured as our Czechoslovak Armored Fighting Vehicles 1918-1948.

"Räder müssen rollen" is a general war picture album about war railroading and has some pictures in it of Kriegslokomotiven.

That's it! Happy railroading,

—George Krausse



Gimme water

Referring to your editorial in issue 15, here's another "Wonder why nobody ever did that?" item: U.S. style metal water cans.

While having the same body as fuel jerry cans, these had a distinctly different spout with a much larger opening and a closing mechanism the resembled that of their German counterparts. Take a look

into any of your reference books, you can't miss 'em.

The lack of this item is especially annoying when building tanks. Having been commander of an M41, I vividly remember lighting my cigarettes on the red-hot mufflers. Do you think we'd have gone around with ten gallons of gasoline in those jerry cans hanging at the turret rear, right above these Zippos? Any tank with such an arrangement could be set afire using a crossbow.

Nevertheless, all available U.S. metal jerry cans depict the fuel variety. Resicast did release water cans a while ago, but their cap-locking levers were 1 mm too long, so they could at best be used to show odd-looking open cans. Come on, industry, gimme water!

—Dr. Peter Schweisthal



A bib might help

Just wanted to thank you guys for the continuing "Dream Machine" series. I have a closet full (well, OK, a garage full) of older kits, and while I really drool over your new kit reviews, I study the "make over" articles even closer. Especially since most of the kits you've been featuring are ones I already own! You have breathed new life into some oldie-but-goodie plastic.

—Guy Fuson

Thanks guy—er, thanks Guy! The general idea of this series is to tap into that vein of unbuilt kits. It also gives us a chance to revisit a subject in greater detail.



Hal gets busy

I just got around to reading Alan D. Morrill's letter in Issue #15. Hats off to the man! As evidenced by the attached photo, I have been around US armored units for a few years myself (it was taken on my father's M26 in Germany, 1951). Not many 4th graders I know got to ride down-range on Table VIII



the "correct, scale color." As Alan pointed out—color varies dramatically from tank to tank, unit to unit. If a tank sits outside (hmmm... I think most do), then the paint fades very rapidly, thus different shades. Some units repainted their tanks every 2 or 3 years, while others repainted them twice a year (i.e., my dad's tanks in the 3d Armored Division, 1958).

Then there was the color mix. Hurrah for modeler's attempts at correct FSNs—Hah! In the 1st Infantry Division (1950), tanks were painted 1 part black to 2 parts OD, then over-sprayed with gloss clear lacquer. In the 3d Armored Division, circa 1958, it was 1 part black, to 4 parts OD, followed by gloss. When I was a commander in the 3d Armored Cav Regiment ('73-'76), we could not get subdued, camouflage paint from the Army, so we went to Sears and bought our own latex to paint the vehicles. By the way, each of the three squadrons was allowed to design and apply a completely different camouflage pattern (are you guys listening to all this?). Oh yes—for most parades back then, it was not uncommon to coat the tanks in diesel fuel, to get a nice sheen. After the parade, off to the motor pool to wash away all the offending dirt.

Obsessive compulsive—anyone who has served in US armor units knows US tankers are VERY anal retentive people. Yes, the tanks look like Hell in the field, but let that vehicle sit idle for 2 days, and you'll see the crew going nuts with spray paint cans, touching up... not to mention going bonkers removing ANY rust/anywhere (end of the gun tube, end connectors) with a wire brush. You never see the end of main gun tubes with black soot on them, let alone rust.

Reality—I admire people who can craft these beautiful dioramas, but guys—sometimes you are soooo far from reality, it is comical. Example: recently in a competitor's magazine I saw a very nice diorama of an M1A1 in Desert Storm. The crew was loading main gun ammunition, and the ammo was standing on the rear deck, on the rounds' bases. GOD HELP ANY TANKER CAUGHT DOING THAT!

Loading ammo is hard work and it is also dangerous. It takes a human chain of 4 men to pass the ammo—ONE ROUND AT A TIME. Next to breaking track, this was my most detested armor chore. You would never leave rounds standing on the rear deck, ready to roll or fall off.

Enough grousing. I think our hobby is great, but I just get a little perturbed at all the emphasis that means nothing to real tankers. Hey—a solution! There are enough guys like me around, who would be more than willing to share our "correct" knowledge and help people with an emphasis on super accuracy. Why not ask?

Thanks for letting me vent.

"If you ain't Cav.... you ain't SHIT!"

—Hank Johnson

Well, you heard the man... Oh, and Hal, where do you find a helmet that small?



He's not heavy...

How about a U.S. M103 Heavy Tank from the '50's, and its Marine cousin the M103A2 from the early '60's. These would probably have to be in resin. Thanks for the great magazine.

—jgazzola@cyberzone.net

This does not appear in the idea bank because at least two resin manufacturers have kits in the works. We're hoping to see something in late 1999.



Rave about FAV's

Hey, guys, forget treads for a minute and focus on wheels! Has any manufacturer out there ever made, is currently making or plans to issue in the future an FAV as used by USN Seals/Army USSF in the Gulf War?

—Wday@hughes.net

We're glad you asked that question! Check out the feature on the Kirin Super Jeep in this issue. By the way, DML did officially cancel their planned release of the Gulf War FAV. As to any other FAV's, we're still hopeful that someone will see fit to so one in resin or even white metal.



Take it easy

I would like to let you know that in the Year in Preview section, I believe that the price that you quoted for the M911 HET by Hobby Fan is too low. I recently purchased the kit for \$250 from M&Models.

As you stated, Legends carries the kit and prices it at \$199.98, but were sold out and weren't sure when they would be getting anymore in.

I have read both of your articles on the Dragon Wagons by DES and Tamiya and would like to know which one you would recommend. I know each has its own good points and bad points, but both look very good from the articles. I purchased the DES M15 trailer to go behind the old Panzer Concepts M26, which is only half finished and after seeing the DES kit I decided to build it or the Tamiya, so I have a trailer. But I could always use this behind the future release of the M123C. Again, I was just wondering if you might be able to give me a quick

answer as to which one you would choose.

—Stan Karpinski

When we list a new product we always try to list the manufacturer's or importers suggested retail prices. Retailers are free to offer the kits for whatever they wish. This is a good example of comparison shopping.

Legends is a great source for the hard to find and they tend to offer a bit of an edge on pricing. However, it wouldn't be hard to find, if it wasn't hard to find, right? Hobbyfan items, like other resin kits are made in limited numbers and the rule for retailers is generally "get 'em while you can."

To answer your question regarding the Dragon Wagon, we'd have to pose one to you: do you want to make your life easier or harder? We'd assume easier and therefore we'd recommend the Tamiya kit hands down.

Resin (at least to us) is always a much more difficult build and in our opinion, the results are much better with the Tamiya kit.

Good thinking regarding that M123. Now if someone would only make a conversion for the Tamiya M15 to the M15A1 and M15A2.



Shameless plug

You will no doubt get about 35,000 responses to your Sherman book in the next few months, most of them by the so-called Sherman experts. A few will point out an infinitely obscure minor discrepancy that might appear in the book, but most will certainly be in overwhelming praise of its contents.

I am not a Sherman expert. In fact, I never real-

ly cared about the vehicle one way or the other. So I haven't gone through the book with a microscope trying to find out if the tow cable actually went between or around the horn and light guard on the M4A1. I am not looking to prove myself more knowledgeable or more of a man than Pete Harlem.

I just wanted you to know that the "Historical Perspective" at the beginning of the book was brilliantly written, and has inspired me to give a closer look at the Sherman. Pete did everything he could to show the Sherman side of the "hunter vs. hunted" discussion, and did so using some arguments that I had previously not considered. Possibly the most compelling thread which ran through the article was to dispel the "superman" myth of German soldiers during WWII, and the fact that many of the so called "references" are filled with little in the way of facts, and much in the way of fiction.

Mr. Harlem gives a level headed description of the real story, and that is so refreshing. My compliments to him and your organization. The book was well worth the wait.

—Bob Clifton



Got a problem with any of this?

Send those comments to: Mail Sack, Military Miniatures in Review or discuss complaints, problems, wisecracks, etc. via the Internet.

Find us at the handle: mmir35701@aol.com

Letters are sometimes edited for brevity, grammar, spelling, national security concerns and other stuff.

We sincerely regret that we rarely, if ever, are able to personally enter into correspondence with our readers.

On Track Model Co.

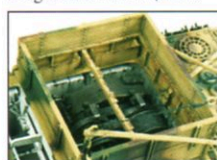
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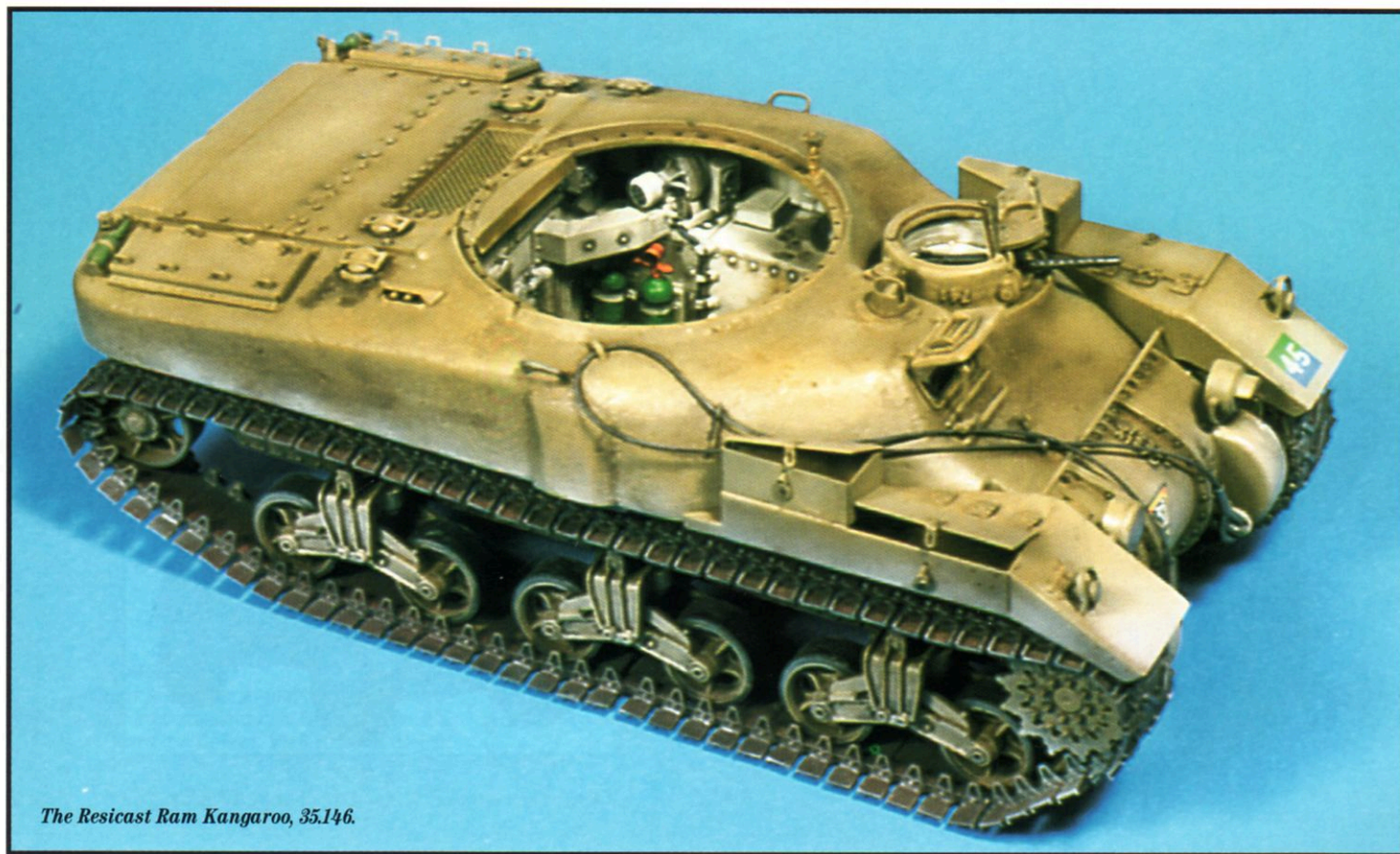
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The Year in Preview



The Resicast Ram Kangaroo, 35.146.

Aber

It just doesn't stop! And we hope it never does. More cool brass sets from the etch-o-maniacs at Aber. Here's a run down on the current crop.

In full sets we have **35044, Sturmgeschütz IV (early)**, brass sheet for the Dragon kit, also made to fit the Italeri and Tamiya models, \$22.99; **35048, PzKpfw 38(t) Ausf G Praga**, for the VM or Italeri kits; **35059, GMC (CCKW-353) closed cabin, US 2-1/2 ton cargo truck**, brass and acetate for the Italeri kit, \$32.49. This last item is just this side of amazing with hundreds of small to minuscule parts. It also appears that quite a bit of it will fit on the new Tamiya model.

In accessory sets it looks like this. **35A44, Brackets for Sturmgeschütz IV side skirts**; **35A49, Back fenders for PzKpfw IV hull**; **35A51, Side skirts for Sturmgeschütz IV** (one complete set of panels); **35A55, Fenders for Panzer 38(t) tank** (for any kit) and **R05, 1/35th Weld lines**. This last set is said to be limited production and its miniature weld beads are suitable for a variety of scales. All these accessories are price TBA.

Aber sets are now officially found just about everywhere.

Accurate Armour

The madmen from Glasgow are still at it. Here's the very latest: **KT117 is the Foden 6x6 Recovery Vehicle**. This is a heavy truck currently in use by the British to yank and pull really big stuff. Another resin, white metal and photo-etched winner, this kit carries an export retail of \$148.98 and an EC price of \$175.00.

KT123 is the **Mk-4 "Big Wheel" Ferret armored car**. This is the swimming version of the venerable British four-wheeler. Export retail here is \$34.00, while the EC price is \$39.95.

In the "Ohmigosh" category is a 1/76th scale rendition of a gun turret from the German battle cruiser Gneisenau. These were used in Norway as fixed emplacements. The official name of the kit is **28cm SK C/34 Drilling Turme and Bunker**. This is kit FF70014 and its export retail is \$59.53, with the EC retail set at \$69.95. The kit measures a hefty 9 x 10.5 inches!

As always, Accurate Armour offers prompt worldwide dispatch of all its products (as well as a few others) and credit card services to boot. For more information see their ad. It's around here somewhere...

Aires

Aires, makers of all things resinny have released

AF3001, German helmets. This is 16 little resin helmets complete with interior liners. The casting is quite good with the rims of the helmets being extremely thin.

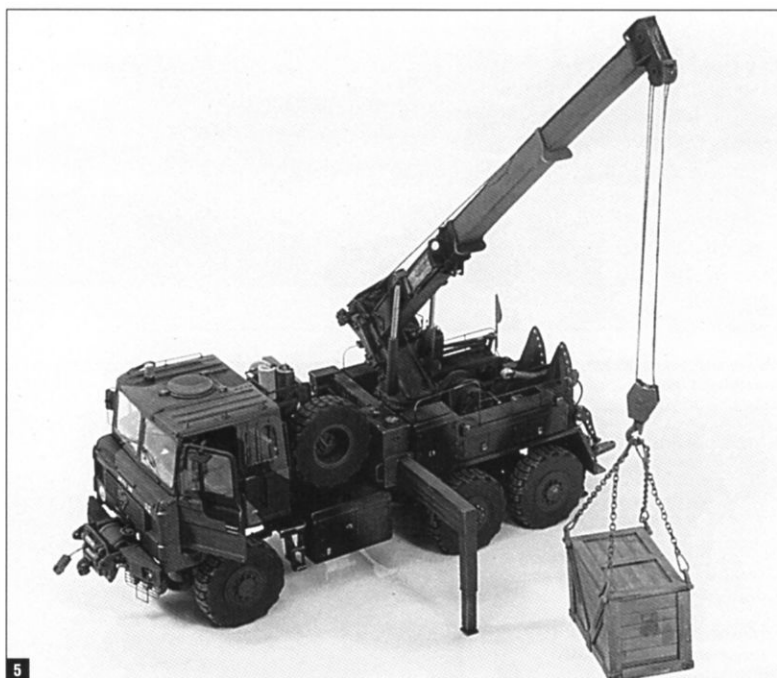
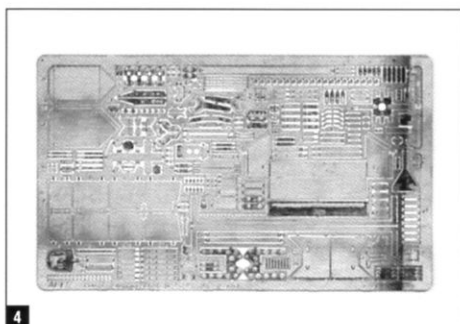
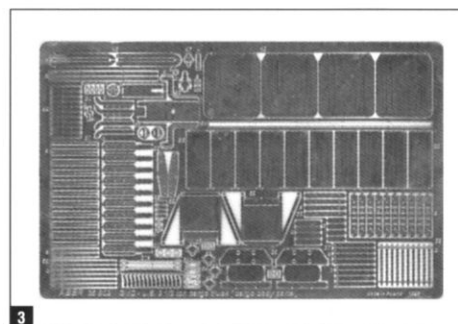
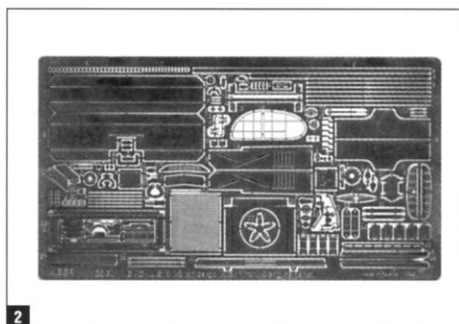
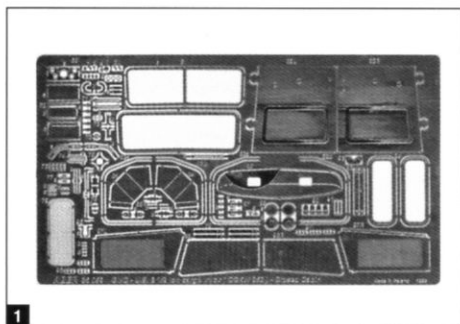
This set is available from Precision Parts Corp. for \$7.99. See their ad in this issue.

Cavalier

These guys, from "down under" make those cool add-on Zimmerit sheets. Up new are: **CV114, Jagdpantzer Zimmerit**, for the Dragon kit 9012, \$19.99; **CV115, StuG III G waffle pattern**, for the Tamiya kit 35197, \$19.99; **CV118 Generic Standard Vertical Pattern Zimmerit Sheet**, \$19.99; **CV119 Generic Horizontal Pattern Zimmerit Sheet**, \$19.99; **CV120 Generic Tile Pattern Zimmerit Sheet**, \$19.99 and **CV121 Generic Waffle Iron Pattern Zimmerit Sheet**, \$19.99. These new generic sheets all contain (2) 8.5 x 6.5 inch sheets and can be cut up as you like.

Each of the sheets also comes with a small Zimmerit applicator to touch up any areas after installation.

The entire line of Cavalier is available at a hobby shop near you or directly from Precision Parts Corp.



1. Sheet one of the Aber set for the GMC 353 truck.
2. The second sheet of set 35059.
3. The third of four sheets in the Aber GMC set.
4. Aber's Sturmgeschütz set 35044.
5. Accurate Armour's Foden 6x6 Recovery Vehicle.

Concord Publications

These titles are either available or about to be added to Concord's extensive line: **6502, Waffen SS: (2) From Glory to Defeat 1943-1945**, by Robert Michulec, ISBN 962-361-632-5, \$9.98; **6503, Operation Just Cause**, by Michael Green, ISBN 962-361-633-3; **7021, Armor of the Deutsche Afrika Korps**, by Hiroshi Kitamura, ISBN 962-361-629-5; **7022, German Self-Propelled Guns**, by Hiroshi Kitamura, ISBN 962-361-630-9; **7023, German Armor of the Italian Front**, by Hiroshi Kitamura, ISBN 962-361-631-7; **7501, Leopard 2**, by Walter Böhm, ISBN 962-361-637-6 and **7502, M1 Abrams**, by Michael Green, ISBN 962-361-638-4.

Concord titles are available at most fine hobby shops and military booksellers.

Cromwell

Cromwell has gone and done a very interesting looking Panzer III D conversion for the Dragon Panzer III E. **CA100, PzIII D1 Command Tank** utilizes the kit's turret and tracks. Price \$49.50.

CA101, M3A1 Cast Hull Lee, makes the rounder version of the well-known U.S. WW2 tank for \$28.50. **CA102, Crusader Track** is a complete set of feet for the Italeri kit for \$9.00. Another different model is **CA103, T31 Turret (demolition)**, the experimental heavy hitter for the DML Easy Eight kits. Price \$19.50. **CA104, Burnt Out Track and Road Wheels**, gives you one side of scorched gear to stick on your Sherman model for \$9.00. **CA105, Reversible Sherman Road Wheels**, is the perfect solution for those blank reverse bogies, priced at \$6.50.

Cromwell Models products are available through The Red Lancers in the U.S., or direct from Cromwell Models, Progress House, 39 Kirkpatrick

Street, Glasgow G40 3RZ, Scotland. Web site <http://www.xs4all.nl/~cromwell>, e-mail: cromwell@xs4all.nl

DES Kits

DES has released their version of the **Sd.Kfz 252**. This is the little ammo re-supply vehicle based on the 250 half-track. The kit is a conversion for the older Tamiya kit and it includes a complete interior with ammo stowage and a separate trailer. Look for stock number 35068.

DES Kits are sold in the U.S. through The Red Lancers.

Dragon

For a company that said it wasn't going to release much this year, Dragon is sure listing a ton of stuff. The following figures are up and coming: **6110, Grenadiers, Panzergrenadierregiment 25 HJ Division (Norrey-en-Bessin 1944)**; **6111, Panzergrenadiers, Panzer-Lehrdivision (Normandy 1944)**; **6112, Sd.Kfz 250, engine with mechanics**; **6113, 3rd Fallschirmjäger Division, Ardennes 1944**; **6115, 352nd Volksgrenadierdivision (Ardennes 1944)**; **6116, Panzermeyer, LSSAH Division (Mariupol 1941)**; **6119, Fallen Comrade, Aachen 1944**; **6120, US Infantry, 2nd Armored Division, Normandy 1944**; **6122, Approach to Stalingrad, Autumn 1942**, and **6124, Panzergrenadier Division "Großdeutschland," Karchov 1943**.

In new kits, we have **6114, Sd.Kfz 2, Kleines Kettenkrad with Püppchen**, this is an all new kit hauling the little 8.8cm gun. **6117, Sd.Kfz 250/1 SPW "Alte Ausf,"** is a bit of a surprise. This is the original

hull configuration of the 250 and it opens up some intriguing possibilities. **6118, 5cm PAK38**, is another shocker. This has yet to be done by any plastic kit company. **6123, 7.5cm PAK 97/36** is a weird one. This is the odd-looking perforated muzzle brake weapon on the carriage of the Pak 50. **6125, Sd.Kfz 250/3 "Greif,"** is the radio version of the early style 250 and it is decked out as Rommel's command vehicle. **6128, Sd.Kfz 2/2, Kleines Kettenkrad with schw. Feldk.**, is your basic Kettenkrad with accommodations for a large spool of comm wire. The catalog also shows the vehicle towing a trailer. **6132, Sd.Kfz 250/11 le SPW**, with Panzerbüchse 41, is again the early 250, this time mounting the Panzerbüchse on the top of the hull.

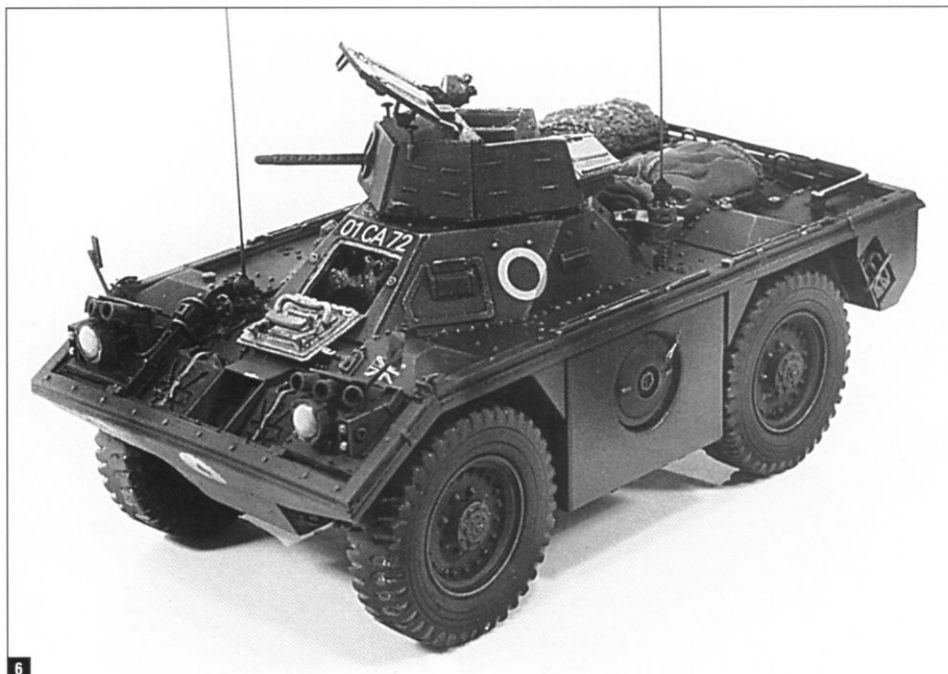
The "big" news, perhaps, is what appears to be another former ESCI offering in the form of **1804, Sd.Kfz 2, Kleines Kettenkrad with Gebrigsjäger**. If this follows the pattern of the earlier releases, it will include a large vinyl figure with the kit. The motorcycles were released in very limited quantities, as these ESCI retreads are licensed by Dragon for only a certain number of kits. If you want one—get it early.

Prices on all the above listed items are TBA.

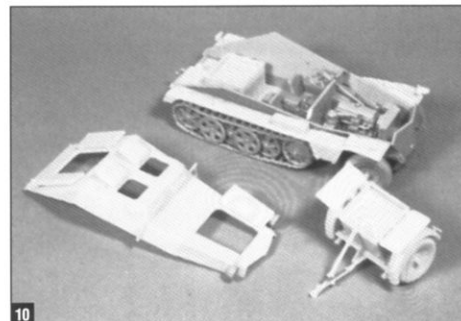
Eduard Model Accessories

A veritable avalanche of etch from our friends in the Czech Republic (do these guys ever sleep?).

35208, T-26, one brass sheet for the Italeri/Zvezda kit, \$11.99; **35214, Steyr RSO w/Pak 40**, for the Italeri kit, \$14.99; **35215, Flakpanzer V Coelian**, brass and acetate gauges for the Dragon kit, \$19.99; **35216, IDF M109AL**, brass and acetate gauges for the Italeri kit, \$19.99; **35217, PzII Ausf L Luchs**, large sheet of brass for the Techmod kit, \$14.99; **35218, M8 Greyhound**, large sheet of brass and acetate gauges for the Italeri



6. The Accurate Armor "Big Wheel" Ferret, KT123.
7. Cromwell's Panzer III command tank.
8. The Cromwell cast hull Lee.
9. Cromwell's Sherman demolition tank.
10. The DES Kit's Sdkfz. 252 conversion.
11. Eduard's IDF M109 set 35216 (one of two sheets).
12. The Eduard Pz. II Luchs set, 35217 (one of two sheets).
13. Eduard's M8 Greyhound set, 35218 (one of two sheets).
14. The Eduard GAZ-66 set, 35229 (one of two sheets) for the Scale kit.
15. Eduard's Dragon Wagon set, 35238 (one of two sheets).
16. The Eduard RSO/Pak 40 set, 35240 (one of two sheets).
17. Eduard's second Dragon Wagon set, 35241 (one of two sheets).
18. The Elite Model's FAUN truck (future release).
19. Fine Molds U.S. AFV Equipment Guard set, MG10.



kit, \$14.99; 35219, **Bergetiger** (Sdkfz 185), brass and acetate for the Italeri kit, \$19.99; 35220, **GAZ66**, nice brass and small acetate gauges for the Scale kit, \$14.99; 35221, **AMX30/105**, large brass sheet for the Heller kit, \$14.99; 35222, **Jeep Willys MB**, brass and acetate for the Revell kit, \$14.99; 35223, **Pz.Kpfw. I Ausf F**, nicely detailed brass sheet for the Alan kit, \$14.99; 35224, **Panzerjäger I**, large brass sheet for the Zvezda kit, \$19.99; 35225, **Su-85M**, two sheets for the Dragon kit, \$19.99; 35226, **T-70**, etched love for the START kit, \$14.99; 35227, **Brummbär late**, for the Dragon kits, \$14.99; 35228, **Brummbär armor**, also for the Dragon kits, \$19.99; 35229, **BRDM-2**, well detailed brass and small acetate gauges, for the Revell kit, \$19.99; 35230, **M48A5 Patton**, for the Academy kit, \$19.99; 35231, **Spaepz Luchs 8x8**, for the rather scarce Revell of Germany kit, \$14.99; 35232, **Tiger (P) Elephant**, 2 large brass sheets for the Italeri kit, \$19.99; 35233, **M110A2SF**, lots of brass for the Revell kit, \$19.99; 35234, **Sdkfz. 234/1**, lots of brass and small acetate gauges for the Italeri kit, \$19.99; 35235, **Mercedes-Benz L701**, one large brass sheet, one small brass sheet, acetate gauges for the Revell kit, \$19.99; 35236, **Bedford QL**, two brass sheets and one small sheet of acetate gauges for the Italeri kit, \$19.99; 35238, **Dragon Wagon**, lots of brass and small acetate gauges for the monster from Tamiya, \$19.99; 35240, **RSO/3 towing Pak 40**, 2 big brass sheets and one small sheet of acetate gauges for the Italeri kit, \$19.99; 35241, **Dragon Wagon boxes and panels**, two very large sheets of brass for the Tamiya kit, \$19.99; 35242, **M101 Howitzer Set**, etch-o-rama for the Italeri kit, \$14.99; 35243, **Merkava Mk III**, for the new Academy kit, \$19.99; 35244, **TPS1 Fuchs**, for the shy Revell of

Germany kit, \$19.99; 35245, **Hinge**, a generic and useful sheet, \$14.99; 35246, **T-26/BT-2**, for the Italeri/Zvezda kits, \$19.99; 35247, **Bishop Mk. I**, for the VM kit, price TBA and 35248, **Centaur Mk IV.**, for the Tamiya kit, also price TBA.

Just one entry in the little stuff this time around: 22022, **Jagdpanther Sdkfz.173**, one sheet of brass for the 1/72 scale Revell kit, \$14.99.

Look for Eduard brass at a hobby shop near you, then buy some!

Elephant Model Accessories

Elephant hails from the Czech Republic and they will be laying the following tasty bits on us in the months to come. In their line of 1/35 photo-etch detail sets we have: EL 35022B, **sIG 33 Detail Set**, \$12.95 and EL 35026A **PzKpfw IIIJ Late Command Tank Detail Set**, \$25.95.

Their line of 1/35 turned aluminum barrels grows to include the following: EL 35303, **76mm Pak 42 L/70 Barrel for Dragon PzKpfw IV**; EL 35311, **45mm Barrel for Italeri/Zvezda BT-5**; EL 35322, **76mm Barrel for Italeri M4 Sherman**; EL 35325, **75mm KwK 37 L/24 Barrel with resin mantlet for Tamiya PzKpfw IVD** and EL 35348, **50mm KwK 38 L/42**, which is two pieces for Dragon PzKpfw III kits. All the barrels are price TBA.

Elite

This small German firm recently announced a full resin kit of the modern **Bundeswehr Faun L908 10-ton 6x6 truck**. An example was on display at the 1999 Trucks & Tracks show and it looked real nice. Retail is still TBA.

Interested parties should contact Elite

Militärmodellbau, Eichgasse 13, 52393 Hürtenwald, Germany. Elite products sometimes can be found through The Red Lancers in the U.S.

Fine Molds

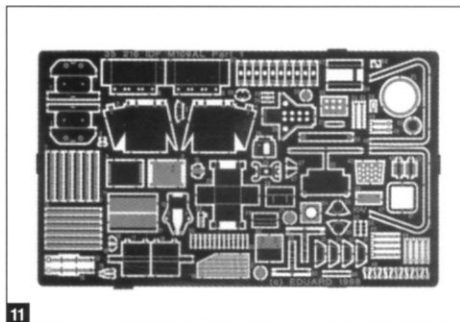
This small Japanese company has been very busy lately. The following accessories are now available: **MG-08, WW2 German AFV periscope set 1**, for the variants of the Tiger and Panther, \$7.95; **MG-09, WW2 German AFV periscope set 2**, for variants of PzKpfw III and IV, \$7.95; **MG-10, WW2 US AFV equipment guard set 1**, \$13.95; **MG-11, IJA Type 3, Medium Tank Set 1**, \$13.95; **MG-12, WW2 German 2cm KwK 38 Gun Barrel Set**, \$8.95; **MG-13, WW2 PzKpfw II, Ausf. L Luchs set**, \$13.95; **MG-14, WW2 German National Markings Stencil Set**, \$13.95; **MG-15, WW2 German Unit Markings Stencil Set**, \$13.95; **MG-16, WW2 German 50mm L/60 KwK39, Gun Barrel Set**, \$8.95; **MG-17, WW2 German 50mm L/42 KwK38, Gun Barrel Set**, \$8.95 and **MG-18, WW2 German 37.2mm L/47.8 Vz37, Gun Barrel Set**, \$8.95.

A few notes on the above. The periscope sets are rather simple clear plastic items which can be painted to create a very realistic effect. The etched sets (MG-10 through MG-15) are all about the same size (2x3 inches) and are all sporting that now popular nickel finish. The U.S. sheet has parts for both the M8 and the Sherman. The gun barrel sets are pretty self-explanatory, with the possible exception of MG-18 which is for the 38(t).

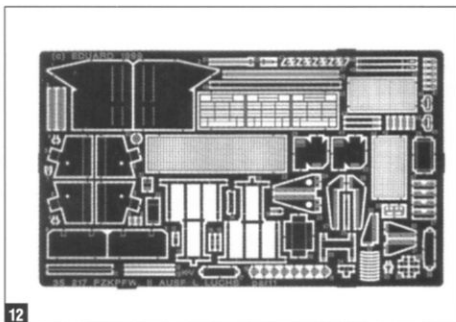
These items are now imported through Chesapeake Model Designs.

Harper Castings

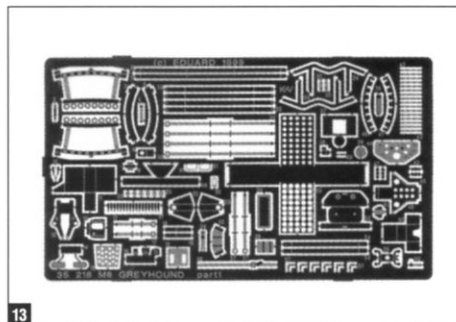
Harper is now offering **HR T01, M3A1 "Satan" Flame Tank**. This is a conversion for the Tamiya



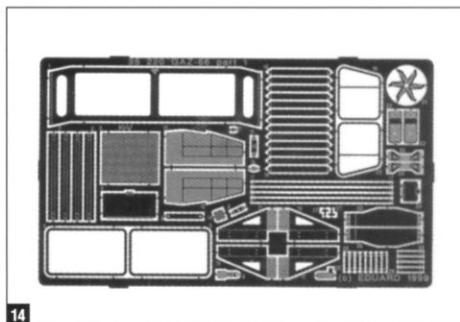
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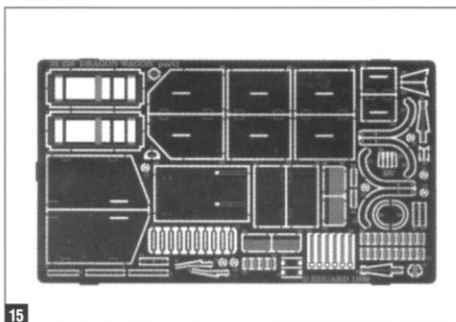
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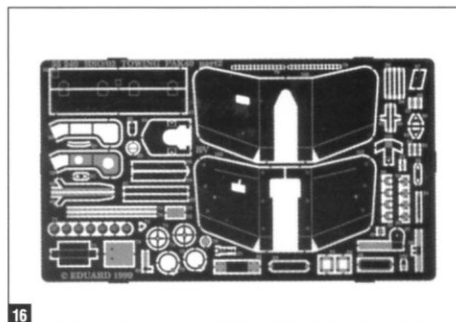
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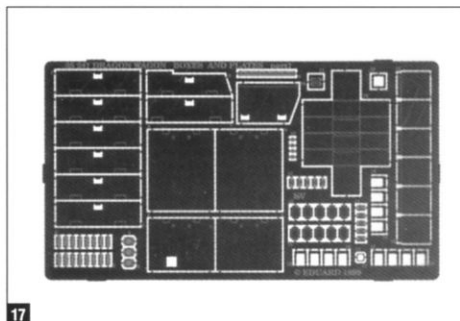
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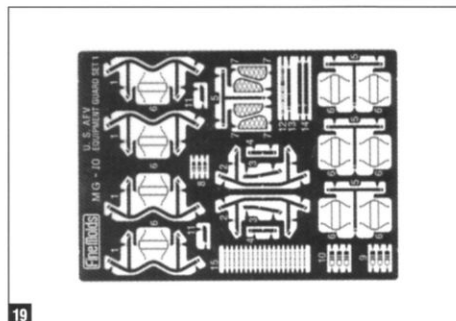
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Stuart and it's priced at \$34.95. It contains a corrected upper hull and turret as well as the flame-thrower bits.

Also look for the following new figure sets: **HR J2, WW2 Japanese Officer w/binoculars, \$12.95; HR J3, WW2 Japanese Tank Crew Maintenance Set (2 figures), winter garb, one standing with shovel, one with pry bar, \$24.95 and HR J4, WW2 Japanese Tank Re-Arming Crew Figures, In winter garb, loading ammo, \$24.95.**

Harper products are now available through VLS Mail Order.

Hobbyfan

Hobbyfan is the distribution arm of AFV Club. They are also known to do the resin thing (and do it pretty well).

Up to the plate are: **HF 008, USN SEAL SBU, 5 figures with boat and clear water base, \$149.98; HF 501, US Army/Vietnam-Mechanized, casual figures sitting & standing, \$36.98; HFS02, 'Safeguard': 196th Inf Bde Vietnam 1968, standing GIs with M16s, 2 figures w/base, \$29.98; HE 503, 101st ABN Radio Unit Vietnam 1968, kneeling RTO and standing GI with mike, 2 figures with a base, \$29.98; HF 504, 173rd ABN Bde-Recon Vietnam 1968, 2 figures with a base, \$29.98 and HE 505, US 1st Infantry Div. Vietnam 1968, crouching GI and GI with M60 walking across creek on a log, 2 figures with a base, \$32.98.**

Although they've been scarce, these products are starting to pop-up in hobby shops and mail order houses. Interested retailers should contact The Right Stuff Distributors. See their ad right here in these pages.

Jaguar

Jaguar, as usual, is very, very busy. Look for the

following new figure sets to appear any minute: **63096, Surrendering Russian Tankers**, Russian tank crew surrendering from their vehicle, \$19.98; **63097, Reloading M8 .50cal machine gunner**, includes gunner and detailed .50cal, \$15.98; **63098, M8/M20 driver and MP directing traffic**, intended for use with Tamiya's M8, \$19.98; **63099, "Desperate Straits"**, two Germans fighting their way out of their disabled Pz, \$19.98; **63100, "The Inspection"**, **The Fuhrer and the Junger, 1945**, 2 figures with base, \$23.98; **63101, German medic with wounded officer**, German medic tends to the head wound of officer, \$19.98; **JA 63102 Reloading Russian Tankers**, \$19.98 and **JA 63103 Reloading Russian Tanker #1**, with ammo case, price TBA

A couple of accessory sets follow: **JA 63832, SU-100/T-34 Exhaust Detail Set**, \$4.98 and **JA 63842, PzKpfw II Lynx Detail Set**, \$15.98. The exhaust set is, no doubt, for the DML kits and the Luchs set for the Tech Mod or the ICM kits.

Jaguar is also listing another full kit in its range. **JA 63903 Panzerkampfwagen IVB** will most likely be another multi-media extravaganza. If it's as good as their Sheridan kit, it'll be a real treat. Look for a retail of \$99.98.

Jordi Rubio

New in the massive line of turned aluminum gun barrels are the following: **48, U.S. 37mm**, for M8 Greyhound, Lee, Grant, Stuart, Staghound; **49, German 4.7cm Skoda vz38**, for Panzerjager I, Panzerjager 35R(f), 4.7cm Pak(t); **50, German 76.2mm FK 36(r)**, for Dana and Marder II; **51, Russian 76.2mm M27/32**, for T-28, T-35, BT-7A, and T-26A.

Accessories, **M01, German MG13 machine gun**,

for PzKpfw 1A/1B; **M02, German MG-25 machine gun**, for PzKpfw 35(t) and 38(t) and **M03, Soviet DT-29 machine gun**.

All the gun barrels are usually preceded by the prefix of TG, while in the states they are commonly preceded by JR. All U.S. prices are TBA.

Minimeca Modelismo

Minimecca is a small Spanish company that is offering a modest line of 1/35th scale armor accessories. They are represented in the U.S. exclusively by VLS.

3504, T-34 Calliope/M4 Sherman, is a set of about 50 stainless steel rocket tubes for creating the rocket array on the top of the tank for \$69.95; **3505, King Tiger/Jagdtiger barrel cleaning rods**, \$4.95, is a useful set of pre-cut telescoping tubing and **3506, Tiger I barrel cleaning rods**, is more of the same also for \$4.95.

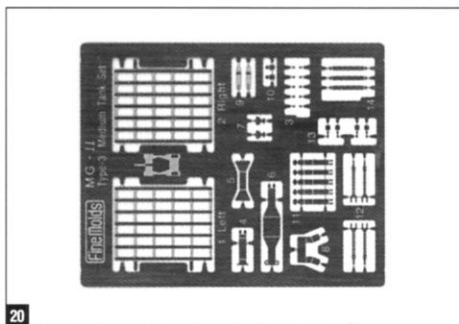
ModelKasten

The very latest run-down on current and future MK workable track sets goes like this: **SK-39, R-35 Light Tank Tracks**, \$34.95; **SK-40, H-35/39 Light Tank Tracks**, \$34.95; **SK-41, M18 Hellcat Tracks**, \$29.95 and **SK-42, PzKfw 35t Tracks**, \$29.95.

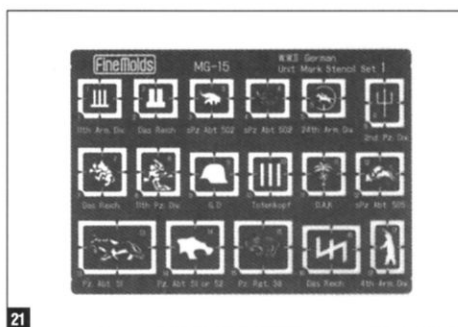
All but SK-41 are available now at tons of hobby shops, as well as Squadron Mail Order, RZM and VLS Mail Order.

Model Rectifier Corp. (MRC)

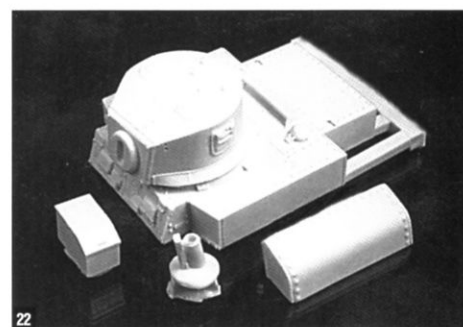
New from MRC is **1391, IDF Merkava Mk III**. It's lookin' pretty hot with a highly detailed hull, turret and bogies and it includes the realistic "chain curtain" armor in white metal. The kit also includes separate roadwheel tires and various accessories for \$32.00.



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20. The Fine Mold's Type-3 etched sheet, MG-11.
21. The German Stencil set from Fine Mold's, MG-15.
22. Harper Castings M3A1 "Satan" Flame Tank, HR T01.
23. MK's latest, SK-39, SK-40 and SK-42.
24. MRC/Academy's new Merkava III.
25. The Plus Model Tatra 57K Kübelwagen.
26. The new D7 Le Tourneau bulldozer from Resicast.
27. Royal's new Gebrigsjäger, 182.
28. Royal 183.
29. The Royal U.S. Infantry, 190.
30. Scale-Line's DAF M39 armored car.

MR Models

The massive array of MR Models kits and conversions are now well distributed here in the U.S. The line is so huge that all we can do is give you the current list. Here we go.

MD 33, 15 U-T Recovery Tank Conversion, for ISU-122/152 for Dragon kit, \$69.95; MD 43, German Tank Leichtkampfwagen, LK II WWI, complete kit with interior, TBA; MD 46, M88A1 GAI Interior Bundeswehr, for AFV Club kit, TBA; MD 48, German MAN 630 L2AE 5-ton, complete truck kit w/detailed cab interior & engine, TBA; MD 49, Japanese SP 15cm Howitzer Type 1 Ho-Ra Conversion, \$42.95; MD 50, AMX 30D Recovery Tank Conversion, for Heller kit, TBA; MD 51, Unimog UI300L Bundeswehr Ambulance, \$60.95; MD 52, SdKfz 251/8 Ausf D Ambulance, interior conversion for Tamiya kit, \$29.95; MD 53, AMX-30 B2 Demineur Telecotamande R/C Mine Clearing Tank Conversion, for Heller kit, TBA; MD 56, Sd.Kfz. 247/A Conversion, for Tamiya Krupke b-wheeler; with full interior and radios, \$109.95; MD 58, Rumanian Tankette B-I (AH-IVR), \$78.50; MD 3530 BT-5 Late Detail Set, resin & metal, \$25.95; MD 3543, 76.2 Ammo Set, for Sherman Firefly & 17-Pdr. Guns, \$22.95; MD 3582, Schwimmwagen Stowage & Equipment, \$15.95; MD 3583, T-54/T-55 Starfish Roadwheels, \$25.95; MD 3584, Schwimmwagen Wheels, \$15.95; MD 3585, T-34/85M Starfish Roadwheels, \$25.95; MD 3586, Japanese Type 97 Chi-Ha Detail Set, \$25.95; MD 3587, Japanese Type 97 Chi-Ha, Shinhoto Detail Set, \$25.95; MD 3588, T-34/85M2 Polish Army Warsaw Pact Forces Detail Set, \$31.95; MD 3593, Renault Turret for

FTI7, for RPM kit, \$16.95; MD 3594, US 6-ton Tank M1917 (FTI7), Conversion for RPM kit, \$22.95; MD 3595, FTI7 Detail Set for RPM kit, TBA; MD 3596, Wheel Set/Transport Panzer I, Fuchs Bundeswehr (old pattern), \$23.95; MD 3597, Wheel Set/Transport Panzer I, Fuchs Bundeswehr (new pattern), \$23.95; MD 3598, Transport panzer I Fuchs Detail Set, \$25.95; MD 3599, PzKpfw II Lynx Turret, with turned barrel, \$21.50; MD 35100, PzKpfw II Lynx Detail Set, \$23.95; MD 35101, Transport Panzer I Fuchs Drivers Compartment, \$24.95; MD 35102, Bundeswehr Luchs 8x8 Wheels, \$24.95; MD 35104, PzKpfw II Luchs Late Turret, \$25.95; MD 35195, Japanese 12cm Howitzer Turret, (Naval design) for Type 97, \$21.50; MD 35106, Spaehpanzer 2 Luchs, (Bundeswehr) Early Pattern Wheel Set, \$25.95; MD 35107, StuG III F-F/8-G, wooden side planks, external air filters, stowage box, \$21.50 and MD 35108, Krupke Protze Early Tires, \$16.95.

MR Models products can be found at a variety of hobby shops, but look to VLS as your alternate source as they are the U.S. importer.

Nuts & Bolts

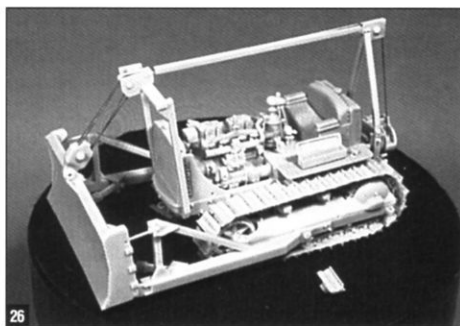
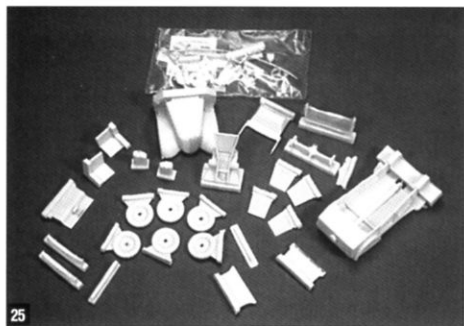
In addition to the new Hummel title, future Nuts & Bolts titles will include: Sd.Kfz 11; PzKpfw 35(t) and Nashorn.

Plus Model

Plus Model is yet another company from the Czech Republic. Are we sensing a pattern here? Well, no matter what the reason for the proliferation of companies from this corner of Europe is, we are happy to have them. Just take a gander at their rather enormous list.

The majority of the items are cleanly cast resin and some items, such as the full kits, also include photo-etch. We have received a couple of samples and the quality is quite good. The products are attractively packaged and the more complicated pieces contain expertly rendered and printed instruction sheets. You can't even say that about some of the older resin makers!

Take a deep breath: PL 3502, WW2 Posters #1; PL 3503, WW2 Posters #2 and PL 3504, WW2 Posters #3, all contain 14 assorted, full color posters for \$3.75 each; PL 3505, Commercial Signs & Placards, is assorted U.S. & German signs in full color, \$3.75; PL 3508, Chevrolet C8A HUP Conversion, is resin and photo-etch for the Italeri kit, \$46.95; PL 3509, U.S. Cardboard Boxes, \$2.95; PL 3510, U.S. C-Ration Cartons (8), \$2.95; PL 3511, U.S. Combat Rations Cartons (9), \$2.95; PL 3512, U.S. Medical Corps Boxes (7), \$2.95; PL 3513, British Boxes (6), \$2.95; PL 3514, German Boxes (7), \$2.95; PL 3515, Road Signs/Pilsen 1945, assorted U.S. & German signs in full color, \$2.95; PL 3519, Flag Set (Assorted), U.S., German, British, Red Cross, and other flags for \$2.95; PL 3529, GAZ M-1 Russian Car, a full kit for \$57.95; PL 3535, Maps, Boards, & Manuals, full color set includes maps, charts, manuals, & more, \$3.95; PL 3542, U.S. Bags, assorted, \$5.95; PL 3543, German Bags, assorted, \$5.95; PL 3551, SdKfz 250/9 Neu Conversion, for the Tamiya 250/3 or 250/9, \$49.95; PL 3552, Lamp Post Set #1 (2), \$10.95; PL 3553, Lamp Post Set #2, with optional damaged parts, plus two wall-mounted lights for \$14.95; PL 3554, Water Pumps (4) with etch \$15.95; PL 3555, Chevy C8A HUW Conversion, \$46.95; PL 3557, Allied Road Signs/Western front, \$4.50; PL 3558, German Road Signs/Eastern Front, \$4.50; PL 3559, German



Road Signs/Western Front, \$4.50; PL 3560, Russian Road Signs WW2, \$4.50; PL 3575, Meal Set, over 25 pieces, sausage, cheese, bread, meat, etc. For \$7.95; PL 3576, Bags for Tanks & Cars (8), \$7.95; PL 3577, Tools and Boxes, open toolboxes with trays and etched tool sets, \$14.95; PL 3579, Wehrmacht Tent, \$3.95; PL 3580, Wehrmacht Tent #2, \$3.95; PL 3581, SS Tent, \$3.95; PL 3582, SS Tent #2, \$3.95; PL 3583, Telegraph Poles (3), Wooden poles with resin & etch details, \$7.95; PL 3585, Cable Reels (6), with etch, \$10.95; PL 3591, German Tempo G1200 All-Terrain Car, a full kit for \$57.95; PL 3592, Opel Blitz 4x4 Ambulance Conversion, box-body ambulance for the Italeri kit, \$59.95; PL 3593, Study Furniture, includes desk, two chairs, bookcase, cabinet, clock, and more for \$25.95; PL 3594, Workshop Equipment, workbench, drill press, dolly with tanks, and more, with etch, \$32.50; PL 3596, Transport Crates (7 large) \$11.50; PL 3597, Tatra 57K Kübelwagen, \$59.95; PL 35107, SdKfz 252 Ammo Carrier Conversion, for Tamiya 250/3 or 250/9 (hollow), \$21.95; PL 35108, Opel Blitz Radio Vehicle Conversion, box-body ambulance for Italeri Blitz or Mercedes L3000 at \$49.95; PL 35109, Kitchen Furniture, table, two chairs, basin, stove, cupboard, shelf, and more, resin kits with photo-etch, \$22.50; PL 35112, SdKfz 253 Conversion, for Tamiya 250/3 or 250/5 for \$26.95; PL 35119, SdKfz 250/3 Neu Conversion, for Tamiya 250/3 or 250/9 for \$49.95 AND... PL 35120, German Field Kitchen, \$28.75.

Plus Model products are available exclusively through The VLS Corp. Interested retailers may also contact VLS for wholesale inquiries.

Precision

As part of their 5th anniversary celebration, this

Belgian company will release a 1/35th scale kit of the German Horchgeräte. This was a large listening device used as part of the early warning systems employed by wartime flak units. This will be a complete resin model.

Mate this baby with some of the other flak gear by DES Kits, like the search light and generator and you've got yourself a real interesting diorama.

The Horchgeräte is a future release and its exact U.S. release date and price is still TBA. Precision products are represented in the U.S. by Chesapeake Model Designs.

Resicast

In addition to their fabulous Bailey Bridge sections, Resicast has released a full kit of the Ram Kangaroo (35.146). This is an extraordinary kit that is crammed with interior detail and includes a huge sheet of etched brass and a full set of tracks. There are also several crew figures offered and they are all available separately.

The US Dozer, Le Tourneau Blade was on display in prototype form at this year's Trucks & Tracks. We have been looking forward to this one. It is the basic wartime D7 with the overhead controlled blade. Look for stock number 35.144.

Resicast products can be found in the U.S. through The Red Lancers. Resicast will also do direct sales. Contact them at 517 Vieux Chemin de Binche, 7000 Mons, Belgium.

RHPS Models

Some new information about the track sets we first told you about in Issue 17. T48 rubber chevron, will be a semi-workable individual link track set, price TBA; T49 3 bar cleat, individual link track set, \$17.95; T51 rubber block, individual link track set, \$17.95;

T54E1 US metal chevron, semi-workable individual track set, price TBA.

Planned future releases include M3/M5, Cromwell, Churchill track sets, M4A2 and M10/M36 conversion kits, Sherman VVSS suspension set and HVSS track sets. For more skinny see the nearby RHPS ad.

R&J Enterprises

R&J has continued its modest line of resin armor products with 35007, 3.7cm Flak 43 "Schwarzwald." This was purchased from HKI/35 and improved, and is a complete resin kit which will include an extensive ammo set with clips, spent rounds, ammo boxes and a metal barrel for \$48.00. Stay tuned for 35008, "UHU" searchlight conversion, a conversion for Tamiya SdKfz 251. This is said to be the most accurate and complete UHU conversion to date. Price TBA, but it should be in \$40-\$50 range.

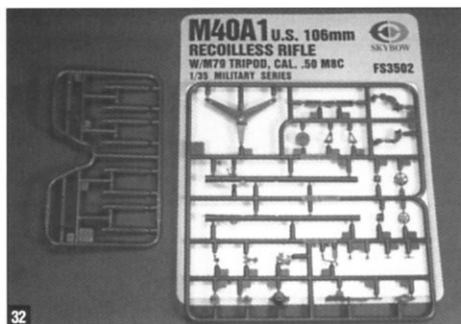
Also coming soon is 35003, Brummbar interior, price TBA; 35237, 3.7cm Flak ammo set, which includes clips, spent rounds and ammo boxes, 40-plus pieces for \$12.00.

For ordering information, see the R&J ad cleverly hidden within these very pages.

Royal Models

Royal has announced the following new figure sets. All are available now. 182, Unteroffizier Gebirgstruppe, \$29.95; 183, German Infantryman with jack, \$12.95; 188, Gefreiter Signals 1941, \$12.95; 190, U.S. Infantry 36th Engineer Combat Regiment, \$12.95.

Number 182 includes a terrific looking section of cliff and a ready made base piece. 183 is perfect for that Steyr model you've been working on and 188



31. The new Skybow M38A1C model.
 32. Skybow's separate Recoilless Rifle set.
 33. The separate Skybow .50 cal set.
 34. Japan-bound TamiyaCon dudes (left to right) Frank K. Lee, Douglas Groom, Steve Palffy and Joe Porter.
 35. Tamiya's new M20.
 36. The interesting looking Steyr Command Car.
 37. The first offering from Takahashi.



includes a table and a signals telephone.

Royal models are available in the U.S. from Chesapeake Model Designs.

Scale-Line

Scale-Line, a small company from the Netherlands, is now offering 135015, DAF M39, Dutch armored car in German service. This is a full kit of the odd-looking Dutch armored car. The kit is cleanly cast in resin and it includes a figure. Fans of early war armor should be thrilled (as we were).

The company plans other releases with this theme and also offers a line of accessories.

For more information contact Scale-Line, Hobby & Modelbouw, Kwelkade 53 k, 4001 RL Tiel, the Netherlands. No U.S. importer is known, but Scale-Line sells kits by mail-order and they do accept VISA.

Skybow

In addition to the new M38A1C Jeep kit that is now available, Skybow will be offering the M40A1 U.S. 106mm Recoilless Rifle as a separate kit, stock number FS3502. The .50 sprue will also be offered as Caliber 0.50 M2 Machine Gun with the stock number FS3501.

Tamiya America

Tamiya has a few things up their sleeves this time around. For those of you following the numbers, after 35232 (Centaur), 233 (Whirlwind), 234 (M20), 235 (Steyr Command), we have: 35236, JGSDF Type 90 with Mine Roller. Now, now don't be so quick to discount this rather obscure piece of modern armor. The original kit was a stunner and might just have been the best piece of Tamiya armor (excluding the Dragon

Wagon). The new kit will include a fully detailed roller assembly. This thing has a distinct Soviet look to it and the model features two different sizes of chain.

35237 will be the German Flakpanzer Mobilwagen 3.7cm Flak 43. This is another modification of their new Panzer IV kit, although it does contain all new parts around the upper deck and shields and a completely new 3.7cm gun. Also note that the 3.7cm gun is not the version once offered in the 8-ton half-track kit (that was the Flak 36).

Sometimes good things really do come in small packages. Almost unnoticed, Tamiya has slipped in a new 1/35th scale motorcycle kit. It is German Motorcycle DKW NZ 350. This was a common type used by the Kradschützen early in the war. We believe this to be another of Tamiya's single-sprue bagged releases.

Prices and release dates are all TBA.

TamiyaCon '99, (Tamiya's 4th) was held in March. There were a total of 324 entries in 34 categories, competing for the grand prize title of Master Modeler and for one of 4 coveted, all-expense paid trips to Japan.

In addition to the contest itself, the event featured seminars on special techniques and procedures. Airbrush Maintenance and Modification, Diorama Ground Cover Techniques and Winter Camouflage for Armored Vehicles were among those topics covered.

This year the big winners of Tamiya/Con were: Steve Palffy of Hillman, CA who won as Master Modeler for his Dragon Wagon; Frank K. Lee of Tustin, CA won the Directors Choice for his F-15 Eagle (we won't hold it against him); Joe Porter of St. Peters, MO clipped the Directors Choice for his Hanomag Diorama and Douglas Groom of Huntington Beach, CA got the Directors Choice for his M4 Sherman.

These lucky dudes will attend the Shizuoka Hobby

Show in Shizuoka Japan (Tamiya's home town). They will visit with Tamiya's designers, tour Tamiya's production and design facilities, and run pant-less through the streets of downtown Tokyo (O.K. we made that last part up).

Tamiya America would like you to be the next Master Modeler, so dates and times of TamiyaCon 2000 (which will be announced soon) can be obtained by dialing 1-800-TAMIYA-A.

Additional information on any of the products mentioned here can also be gleaned by calling this same number.

The Tank Workshop

Here's the skinny on the latest good stuff from TWS. In full kits we have TW0094, M123C 10-ton 6x6 Tractor. This is the massive post-war version of the Dragon Wagon. It towed the M15A1 and M15A2 trailers. Look for a retail of \$98.00.

The ultra high value accessory line looks like this: TW 017, BA-20 Armored Car Spoke Wheels with Civilian Pattern Tires, \$6.00; TW 2042, Kfz. 15 Horch Wheels (5), for Italeri \$4.00; TW 2043 PzKfw IV Cooling Fans with Cross Drive, \$2.00; TW 2044 Flak 88 Single-Round Boxes (10), \$6.00; TW 2047, SdKfz 7 8-ton Spoke Wheels w/Civilian Pattern Tires, \$3.50; TW 2048, SdKfz 223 Wheels with Chains, \$6.50; TW 2049, Horch Type Ia Wheels w/Chains, \$6.50 (for Tamiya kit); TW 2050, Early Tiger I Muzzle Brake with Canvas Cover, \$4.00; TW 2051, Late Tiger I Muzzle Brake with Canvas Cover, \$3.75; TW 2052, Panther Muzzle Brake with Canvas Cover, \$3.75 and TW 2053, PzKpfw IV Muzzle Brake with Canvas Cover, \$3.75.

In the architectural department look for TW 1014,

Ornate Stone Pillars (6), this is decorative pillars for stairs, courtyards, sidewalks, etc. for \$5.00.

Takahashi Modelling

This is a little known line of white metal figures from Japan. The odd-thing is that although we have seen their catalog containing over 25 miniatures, only one has been released so far. **TK-01, German "LAH" SS Brig. Sturmgeschütz NCO, Barbarossa 1941**, strikes a casual pose. The figure is well-sculpted and attractively packaged. The individual metal pieces are separated to keep them from becoming damaged, which is a nice touch.

The entire line looks quite exciting with all the various figures specifically designed to compliment an armor model. Certain sets are also designed to be displayed together as an option.

Look for the current figure and all future pieces to be released through RZM Imports.



Book Reviews



Field Uniforms of Germany's Panzer Elite

by Robert J. Edwards, Jr. and Michael H. Pruett

J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing
Hard cover

321 pages B&W and color photos
\$70.00

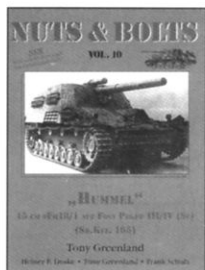
ISBN 0-921991-41-X

THIS BOOK IS A FOLLOW-UP TO the earlier *Field Uniforms of the German Army Panzer Forces in World War 2*. It covers the uniforms of all those formations which were not specifically Army Panzer formations such as the Waffen SS, Hermann Göring and Großdeutschland.

Like the first volume, the authors have a terrific eye for the unusual and the interesting.

The lion's share of the photos are not common and in most cases are published here for the first time. The authors have drawn heavily on several private photo collections. Most of the photos are large and clear and most also feature a great view of an armored vehicle as a bonus!

We especially enjoyed the color section which features dozens of close-up color photos of various uniforms and their details. Figure freaks rejoice!



"Hummel" 15cm sFh 18/1 Auf Fgst PzKfw III/IV (Sf)

by Tony Greenland

Nuts & Bolts Vol.10

Soft cover

72 pages B&W with some color illustrations
\$20.00

THIS IS THE TENTH RELEASE FOR this prolific group of publishers. This time we get an extra dose of the N&B

treatment: an expanded format with more photos, color plates and color unit markings.

Throw this into the usual mix of wartime photos, contemporary museum shots and line drawings and you've got a super little reference book.

The bibliography and research sections are also a bit more hefty in this volume, with a thorough run-down on the units using the Hummel and a series of 3/4 line drawings illustrating some of the smaller unit modifications to the vehicle.

Good references have been tough to locate for this vehicle and interested individuals should proceed with the utmost alacrity. Others should simply hurry!

Jagdtiger

The Most Powerful Armoured Fighting Vehicle of World War II

1, Technical History

by Andrew Devey

Schiffer Publishing Ltd.

Hard cover

139 pages, B&W throughout

\$49.95

ISBN 0-7643-0750-9

Jagdtiger

The Most Powerful Armoured Fighting Vehicle of World War II

2, Operational History

by Andrew Devey

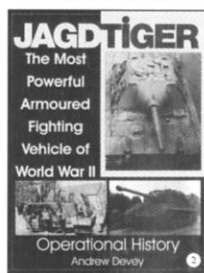
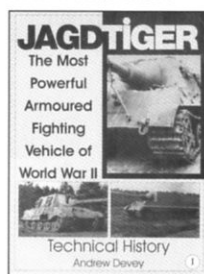
Schiffer Publishing Ltd.

Hard cover

304 pages, B&W throughout

\$49.95

ISBN 0-7643-0751-7



THESE NEW VOLUMES FROM Schiffer represent the ultimate telling of the Jagdtiger story. Volume one covers the vehicle itself. This is a very in-depth look and this first book draws heavily on the operation and maintenance manuals issued during the war. This is further supplemented with a variety of excellent drawings and black & white photos. If you're out to super detail a model you'll find this book indispensable.

The second volume covers the vehicle in the field. The Jagdtiger's deployment is described unit by unit and all the chassis numbers are traced from the factory to the field. Both books are

very well researched, but we were somewhat disappointed with the presentation of this second volume (Did we even need a second volume? Couldn't this have been done in a single big book?). Photos of this beast are scarce and most of those that appear in the book are quite small, measuring only about 4 x 2.5 inches. This is often in contrast to certain original documents, which are reproduced full size! The most frustrating examples are the series of photos showing the surrender of the Jagdtigers of PzJg.Abt 512 to U.S. troops in May of 1945. These photos are quite clear and we are tempted with a double page spread showcasing one of these shots at the beginning of the book.

We don't fault the author here, as many times authors have no control over what happens to their material once its been turned over to the publisher.

The author's research was almost a quest that began many years ago and resulted in an extraordinary 1/12th scale metal model of the Jagdtiger. This is an awesome piece of model engineering and it is also covered in the second volume, albeit with more of those frustrating small photos.

Overall a good show. Kudos to Mr. Devey, but next time we hope Schiffer will take a bit more care in presenting this type of research.

Tank Power 1

PzKpfw. V Panther Vol. 1

by Adam Jarski

AJ Press

Soft cover

100 pages, B&W with color plates and photo section

\$19.95

ISBN 83-7237-012-5

Tank Power 2

PzKpfw. V Panther Vol. 2

by Adam Jarski

AJ Press

Soft cover

104 pages, B&W with color plates and photo section

\$19.95

ISBN 83-7237-017-6



WHILE WE WERE WAITING TO review the first volume of this series we were pleasantly surprised with the arrival of the second. These two modest soft cover books are packed with fascinating photos and line drawings of the Panther. We thought there was nothing new to print on this tank, but...

The first of what may actually be several books covers the Panther G (the author explains the chronological gaff) and there are over 50 pages of line drawings illustrating every variant and nuance of this model. Some rare photos come along for the ride, with one or two real shockers regarding the installation of the infra-red device.

Volume two picks up that theme again with more photos of the IR devices themselves and way more drawings (probably close to a hundred).

The second book also opens with the only photos we have ever seen of the Panther fitted with a steel wheel on the last roadwheel station. They actually found two shots!

A few drawings follow on the command versions of the G, but the balance of the book covers the Bergepanther in all forms and this is really the meat of this volume. 28 pages of line drawings flesh this out along with dozens of rare photos.

The text is in both Polish and English, as are all the captions. Both books also contain color plates and a short color photo section.

These books are a tremendous value at the listed price and the paper and printing quality are first rate. We eagerly await the next installment!

Tank Girls

by John Francis Hope

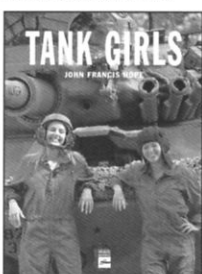
WAG Books

Soft cover

64 pages, full color throughout

\$15.95

ISBN 1-902579-18-6



WE WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY THAT this book is disgusting. Shameful in fact, and we are outraged that it even exists. A book composed of nothing but full-color photos of semi-nude women cavorting among various armored vehicles? Outrageous! Sacrilege! Someone must put a stop to it!

All of us here at MMiR have thoroughly reviewed

the enclosed material and found it to be patently offensive in every way. This was not an easy decision to arrive at, because we each felt that we should carefully review the book several times. Each time we found it to be more offensive than the last time. And, as a service to our loyal readers, we will continue to review the enclosed material, lest at some point in the future it may become slightly less offensive.

We recommend that, in order to be properly angered by its contents, you may also wish to purchase this book (for research purposes only, of course).

Saumur: runner's paradise



Photos by Joe Morgan.

If the British Tank Museum at Bovington is Mecca to treadheads, then the French Tank Museum at Saumur must be Lourdes. Both are more than worth a pilgrimage. The museum is located in the Loire Valley, a couple of hours by car southwest of Paris. Although far from the main battle areas of the 1940 campaign, Saumur is not without its own WWII history. It was (and still is) the French cavalry school, steeped in a concept of honor as strong as any. The idea of surrendering the school to the hated Boche was an anathema to the commander and students, so for three days the two thousand cadets and their instructors fought a German division to a standstill in the city. Their opponents were, strangely enough, the only remaining cavalry division in the Wehrmacht, the First, later to become 24 Panzer Division. Honor satisfied, low on food and ammunition, the cadets gave up with the city seriously damaged around them. This epic stand came *after* Marshal Petain and his defeatist cabinet had asked for an armistice!

The Museum, which recently moved to new and larger quarters, is unique among the world's armor museums in that a large proportion of its exhibits are runners. At least half of the vehicles are in operating condition, and the staff is constantly working to keep the numbers up and to add to the total. While I was there I saw first hand evidence of this: behind one of the main buildings, the engine in a Panther was being changed. Think about that for a second. That means that not only do they have

Panthers (and they have a bunch of 'em), they also have spare engines!

Speaking of runners, while I wandered through the somewhat stark exhibits (there's not near as much associated material as at Bovington) I heard something running out front, with the unmistakable clatter of tracks on hard surface. Looking out the window, I saw to my amazement a Matilda II being loaded onto a transporter *under its own power*. That itself was worth the trip.

The highest proportion of vehicles is from the Second World War, closely followed by post war French armor, of course. There are a great many prototypes on hand; it looks as though French manufacturers routinely turn them over to the museum, or perhaps the French Army does. There are only a few WWI vehicles, first being the St. Chamond that's right inside the front door. As you would expect, there are several FT-17s.

There are many rarities, also to be expected. A Char B1 and an FCM 36 are in the entrance hall, and must be the only remaining examples. They're for sure the only ones running! There is a Bergepanther, equipped with the seldom seen 20mm gun on the glacis, surely the one Italeri patterned their kit after. And sitting right out front when we arrived was an armored cab Dragon Wagon, still performing its duty as a transporter, as it had an M4A3E8 aboard.

Inside are Laffly tractors and Somua half-tracks, along with some German halftracks, including a SdKfz 251/17 with the bridges. One

Jagdpanzer has been left as recovered, with a big hole in the front plate, about 90mm or M36 size. There's a fair number of artillery pieces, mostly anti-tank guns. By far the greatest part of the collection is not on display, however. If you speak French, or have someone with you who does, you may be able to wheedle a tour of the back areas of the museum, which have enough stuff to make your eyeballs stick out on stalks like a crab's.

I can't tell who the curator is, because I don't read French, and curator must not translate exactly. There is a "Friends," or "Amis" in this case, with the same deal as Bovington's. The magazine is, of course, in French, but it has photos you've never seen, and occasionally a model review.

I'm not sure if the same service for photos that Bovington offers is available or not; I saw no evidence of it. Where Bovington's well-stocked gift shop offers a selection of books, photos, models, T-shirts, sweat shirts and other knick-knacks, Saumur had hardly any gift shop at all. I understand this situation has been or will be rectified, probably by taking the Bovington store as an example: the cash register never stopped ringing while I was there.

Accommodations are plentiful in the town and are quite reasonable. There's no cafeteria at the museum, like there is at Bovington (where I had the worst food I had in England; after one day I stuck to beer), but you'll have a hard time finding a bad meal anywhere in France. Saumur is no exception, and the museum is closed two hours for lunch, so you've got plenty of time.



Just a very small sampling of what is on hand at the museum. Left and above: the star of the WW2 French collection, the Char B. This fine example is slightly worst for the wear; note the shell gouge just above the word "Rhône." Below: this is a working museum all right. Here is the "house" Dragon Wagon hauling a Sherman E8 to destinations unknown. Below: probably the only place you can see this: the 2cm gun that was factory equipment on the German Bergepanther.

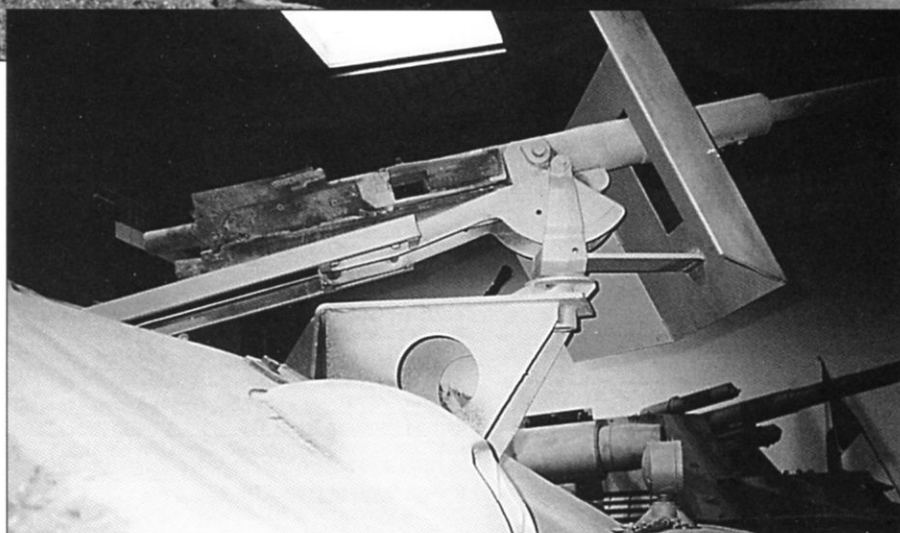


To summarize, the two museums are somewhat different in emphasis. The British one is devoted purely to history, with its attendant exhibits. The French one is more mechanical, with its emphasis on having as many runners as possible. An interesting sidelight on Saumur; they have a large number of WWII era cranes and transporters that are in use every day in the maintenance and transport of the vehicles. They aren't on exhibit; they work!

—Joe Morgan

Museum/Friends Address

Association des Amis du Musée des Blindés
Hotel Du Commandement
1. Place Du Chardonnet
49409 Saumur Cedex
France



Autos alá Simca

TWO PETITE TREATS FROM THE FOLKS AT DES



Photos by Joe Morgan.

One item of military equipment missing in the current flood of WWII kits are automobiles of the period. Civilian cars were bought and impressed in large numbers at the beginning of the war, and those not grabbed could still be seen on the roads. Populating a European diorama with private transport mixed with military vehicles just wasn't possible. Some cars have begun to show up; Azimut's efforts, like their new Peugeots and the big Mercedes come to mind.

Now the French resin manufacturer DES has done their part to remedy the situation with the release of two little Simca cars, a closed top ("berline") and open top ("berline decapotable"). These diminutive autos were license built FIAT Topolinos, and in fact were in production before the Italian version. They were, of course, used by the French army and seized in numbers and used by the Germans as well.

The Kits

DES kits are well known for their excellent quality, and these are no exception, even though they were pre-production kits picked up by the

editor at EuroMilitaire. One of the bodies had a visible pinhole, the only time I can ever remember seeing a flaw like this in a DES kit, but it was small

and easily fixed. And keep in mind, this was a prototype kit.

The most obvious difference between the two kits is, of course, that one is open and one closed. The only other difference that I could see is that the seats are different; those of the closed car being more like a 'real' seat, while the open one has metal framed ones like a jeep.

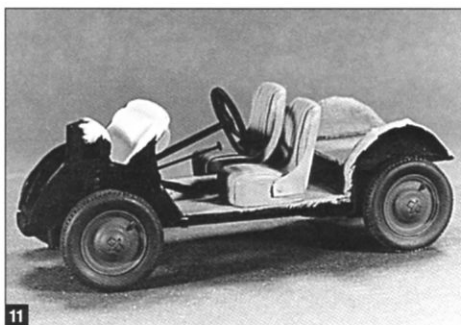
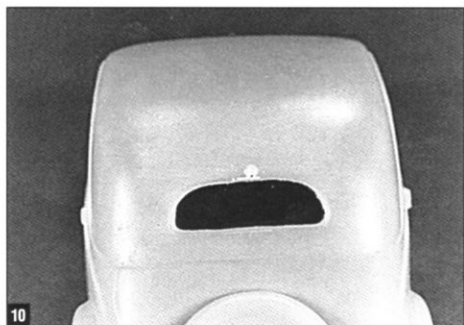
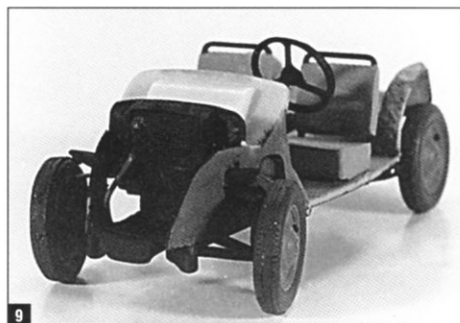
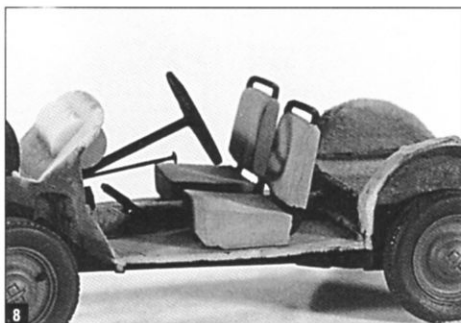
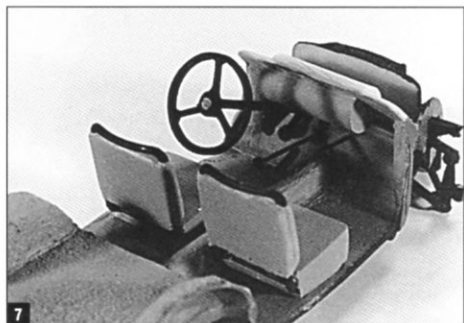
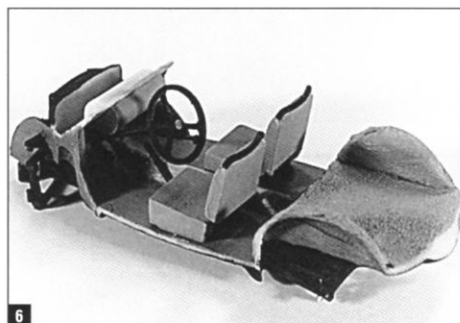
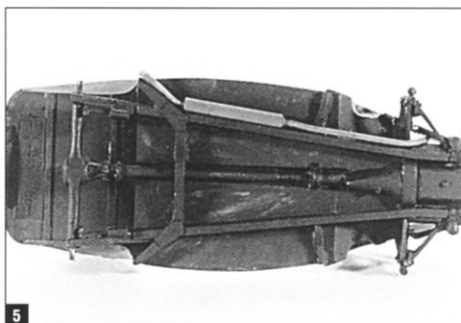
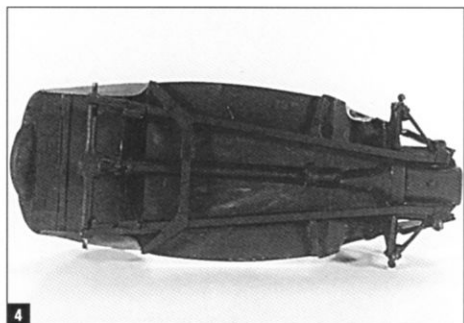
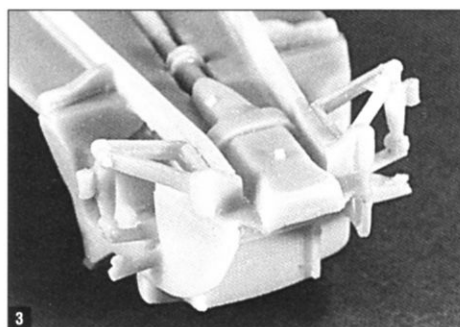
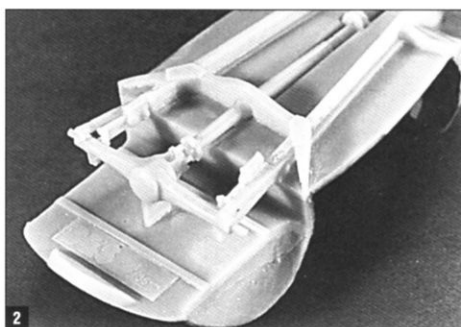
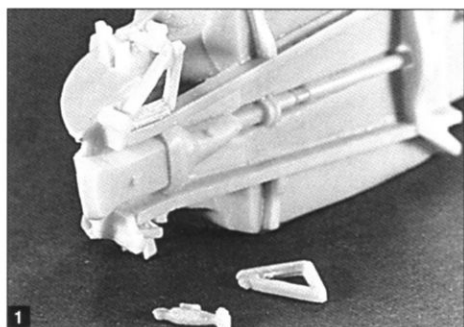
Construction

The instructions, comprised of photos of the kits in assembly and drawings of various subassemblies, would have you begin with the interior, then go to the suspension. I did this the other way around, but it probably makes little difference. Regardless, you have to paint as you go.

I painted the interior floor pan gull gray. Then I was ready to add the running gear. The rear axle was first; one kit it was a glove fit, the other I had to do some work on one of the mounts on the chassis (it had some excess resin).

The next step is the front suspension, consisting of some quite delicate parts. The plans tell you to 'Hollow out the lower triangle...'; if you completely clean the resin web from this part 17, it'll be too flimsy, in my opinion. I cleaned out all but a bit, maybe a





1. Front suspension: complete below, the unassembled parts at top. While fragile, they do have good glue points, and should survive all but the crudest handling. 2. Rear suspension: on one car, some cleanup of the area where the forward arm fits was necessary, while the other was an easy fit. 3. Finished front suspension, showing the delicate parts. 4. & 5. Finished chassis, painted black. In #5, the exhaust system is installed, painted rust. 6. Interior. This is the open car, with its jeep like seats. Compare to #11 for the difference in the two seat styles. 7. Visible here, barely, are the pedal cluster under the steering column and the gearshift lever made from a pin. 8. The chassis up on its wheels; note the handbrake showing between the seats. 9. Front view of the chassis on its wheels. 10. Right above the back window on the closed car was a pinhole, the first I've ever seen in a visible place on a DES kit. It was easily fixed, though. 11. Here's the closed car interior. Notice that the seats are completely different from the open car's in photo 8.

couple millimeters, at the top of the "A" where the upright axles (parts 16) fit. This whole assembly looks really fragile, but there are actually three good glue points, and when it's in place it is reasonably sturdy. Use gel super glue to give you time to work. And the design allows the wheels to be posed instead of just straight ahead. Then I painted the chassis and running gear black.

Step three of the chassis ("axles mounting") plans tells you to add the engine, part 18. There is none, which is no big deal, 'cause you couldn't see it anyway; the hood doesn't open. The exhaust system is there, and fits right in place against the left frame rail, the pipe leading up through the A-arm and into the engine compartment.

Now the interior can go in. The seats will need to be painted first, of course; I used Polly S khaki for the cushions. The metal framing was done in black on the open car and gray on the closed. A diagram gives the seat position, 10mm from the step in the

floorpan. Make sure these go inboard, close to the driveshaft tunnel. If they're too far out, they'll conflict with the body mounting.

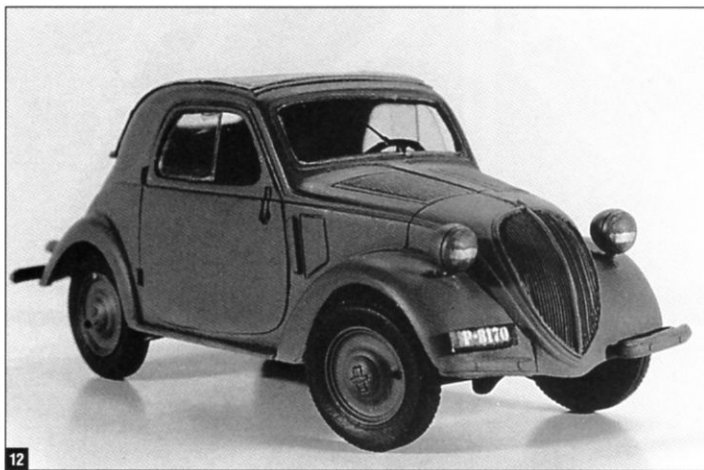
You have to make your own gearshift lever; I found that a straight pin, suitably bent and shortened, fills the bill. There's a pedal cluster attached to the bottom of the steering column, and a fairly well detailed dashboard. The dials aren't detailed, but you couldn't see 'em if they were. Dry fitting the dashboard shows that it doesn't fit under the cowl, but on the lip just below the windshield.

The biggest pain in the kits are fitting and mounting the windshield and other glass. A set of templates are provided, but these are only a rough approximation of what the finished items will be. This means a lot of dry fitting, trimming, and sanding. At least the provided plastic is easily worked. I glued these in with white glue; make sure you've got a good bond, 'cause if anything falls off after the body is on the chassis you're S.O.L. The back

window on the open top car came off during the mounting process, so I know what I'm talking about here.

The side windows are best done by holding a rough cut piece of plastic up to the inside of the window and tracing the outline on it. The side windows slide open, rather than wind up and down, so two pieces are needed for both sides. If you pose the windows open, like I did, you'll only need to get a precise fit on the rear pieces.

After the glass, the body and frame can be joined. All that's left are the small parts, the bumpers, lights, and in the case of the open car, the top. You're given a choice between the folded and



12



13

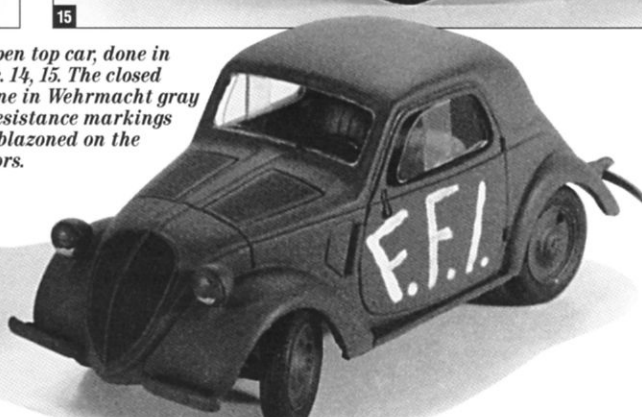
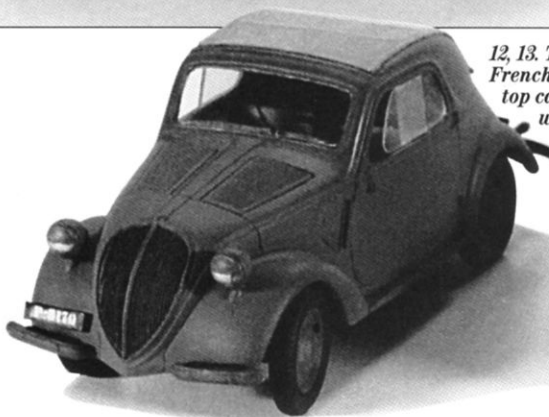


14



15

12, 13. The open top car, done in French olive. 14, 15. The closed top car, done in Wehrmacht gray with resistance markings emblazoned on the doors.



unfolded top. I wanted to pose the top open, but I couldn't get a good fit with the folded top. Plus the plans show two bits of wire going to the top, but they don't show just how they fit. Oh, well; the top went up.

A set of license plates are given and the plans give some numbers, but the numbers and the plates don't fit, size-wise. So I used a set of numbers from my spares that did fit. They were one number short, but what the hell. Since the closed car was to be done as a 'recaptured' Wehrmacht vehicle, I put no plates at all on it, figuring the resistants would have quickly jerked the German plates off.

Last to go on were the windshield wipers. I think that only the driver had a wiper, but I could be wrong. The plans tell you to make the blade from a bit of plastic card, but every time I tried to cut something this thin, it curled up. Solution; use stretched sprue. At this size, you can't tell the cross-section is round. The plans also tell you to make the wiper arm from wire, but the miniscule size defeat-

ed me, so I used some brass parts from my spares.

Paint

I did the open car in French olive, marking the car as a line of communications auto of the French Army in 1939-40. The closed car was done in German gray, as an impressed Wehrmacht vehicle. The car had then been seized from the Germans during the liberation of Paris in 1944 and crudely

marked with the resistance "F.F.I.", for French Forces of the Interior.

Conclusion

More really nice stuff from DES! Whether you do these as civilian or military cars (after all, only the paint is different) these little gems could really spice up a diorama. 

—Joe Morgan

MMIR RECCE

SIMCA 5 Berline, kit number 35066. This is the Sedan version

SIMCA 5 décapotable, kit number 35067. This is the open topped version.

Both kits graciously provided by the manufacturer. Retail price unavailable at press time. U.S. retail will probably be around forty to fifty dollars.

References

L'Automobile Sous L'Uniforme 1939-40 Editions Ch. Massin, by Francois Vauvillier & Jean-Michel Touraine, 1992, ISBN 2-70720-197-9. A complete French text photo guide to all pre-war French military vehicles.

Mastercon Madness

WE RETURN FOR YET ANOTHER LOOK AT WACKY MIDWEST MODELING FUN

What's seven years old, and has giant U-boats, DORA guns, Wespes, Panthers and Dragon Wagons? Why, it's MasterCon, of course, the VLS Corp.'s yearly celebration of all things geeky and the people who love them.

This is our third year covering MasterCon and although we are not quite sure why we keep getting invited back, the show never fails to amaze.

It's a teeny show by, say, Euro Militaire or IMPS standards. Really small, in fact. What sets it distinctly apart from all the other shows is the purely insane nature of most, if not all the entries.

MasterCon is where the extraordinary becomes ordinary. "Oh, I see you brought another 1/16th scale diorama this year" You see, the show, or at least the competition is rather, unremarkable if judged only by its size (about 425 entries or so). It's the quality of the models that will blow you away. And it's not the just the craftsmanship, it's also the concepts.

Have you ever been to a show and seen a rather large model entered only to get up close to it and see it wasn't all that well built? This is rarely the case at this particular show. Case in point: the amazing 1/16th scale U-boat model by Andy Meyer (that's right, we're talking big here). Once you got up close, it was evident that the craftsmanship needed to pull something like this off was present right down to the smallest level.

There also appears to be a rather friendly spirit of competition among the "Masters of the Universe," i.e. the guys that bring all this huge stuff. Nothing seems to be too big or too outrageous.

This is due, no doubt, to the fact that MasterCon is a balloted competition and these guys are not getting off easy! The assembled group always appears to cast a rather critical eye on the model.

It's not all big stuff. There is always a large and attractive selection of 1/35th scale models as well as smaller pieces and even one or two airplanes (although open to virtually any model, the show has a distinctly armor flavor).

How wacky will it get? Good question. According to rumor, this year's show may see the appearance of a 1/15th scale Manitowoc Crane (a caterpillar tracked monster with a 230 foot boom—you do the math), a 1/16th scale Dragon Wagon and a 1/9th scale 105 Sherman. Just another day in MasterCon-land.

Since we're on the subject, it bears mentioning that there has been a lot going on behind the scenes at the VLS Corp. As some of you may know, the partnership that once existed between Verlinden Productions and the VLS Corp. has now been dissolved. Both companies will continue to function independently and VP products will remain part of the large array of goods sold through VLS.

The exciting part about all this is that VLS has relocated to an immense 35,000 square foot facility located in Moscow Mills, MO. This is not far from

the original facility and those of you who attend future MasterCons will have the opportunity to see it during the regular tours. Masters Group members also take advantage of a rather substantial sale at the warehouse.

The VLS Corp. has also brought Warriors Scale Models and Custom Dioramics under its corporate umbrella and they will both continue to crank out the goodies. We hear that there is a TON of interesting stuff in the works and we will keep you up to date as it all develops.

So, all in all, a very exciting time for the boys (and girls) from Missouri, not to mention the hobby as a whole!

And don't forget that Miniature World, the Mecca for all things armor, is still a component of the VLS machine. Regularly shuttled tours are always part of the big MasterCon weekend.

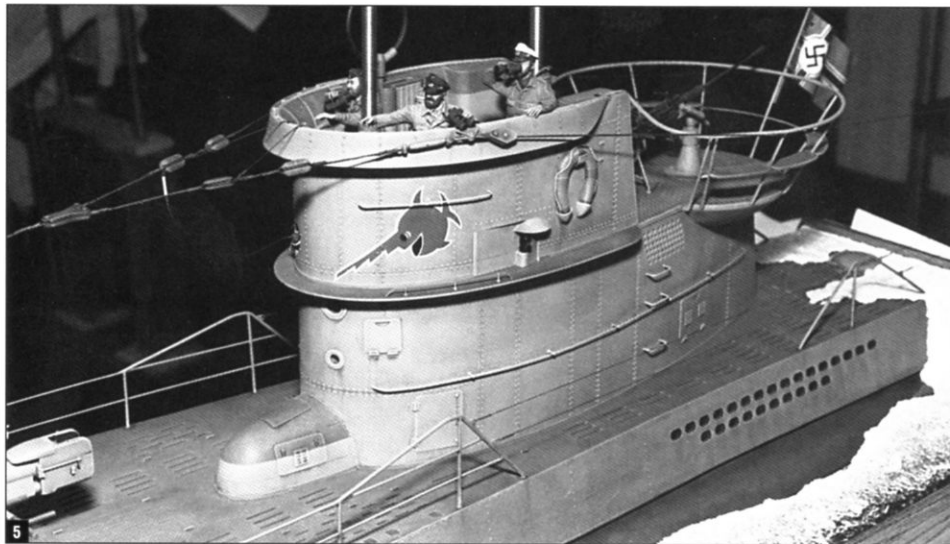
The show still falls over the long Labor Day weekend, but remember that the fun breaks up early Sunday morning, so it's more than possible to still include it your existing Labor Day plans. The show is held at a Holiday Inn and they do provide regular service between the airport. In past years, we grooved on all the activities and still got back to Florida for dinner Sunday night.

It's definitely worth checking out. For more information contact The VLS Corp. 1011 Industrial Court, Moscow Mills, MO 63362. Phone: 314-356-4888, fax: 314-356-4877. E-mail vlsmo@il.net.

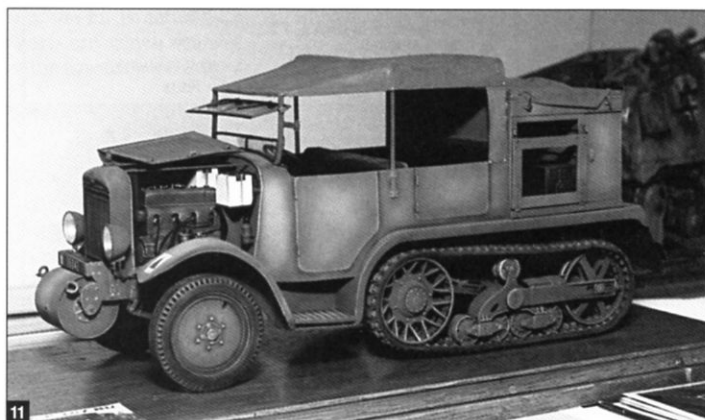


1. A bird's eye view of Greg Chilar's diorama featured on our cover. 2. A nicely executed Tiger I depicting Michael Wittman giving a factory speech. 3. Mort Schmitt's interesting astronaut figure. 4. Another unique 1/35th scale model, a Panther II.



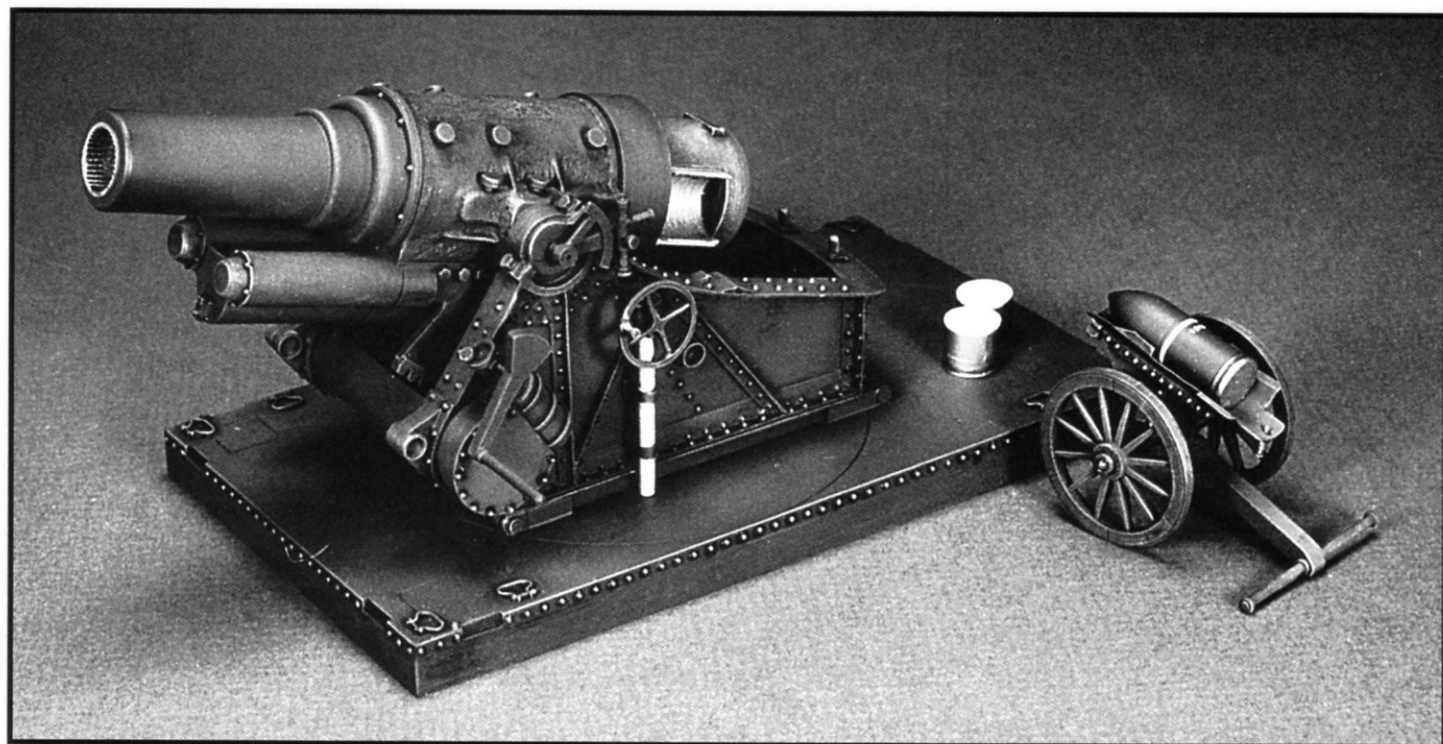


5. The conning tower of Andy Meyer's awe inspiring 1/16th scale U-boat model. He rented a special U-Haul van to get it to the show. 6. A beautifully painted Andrea BMW with side car. 7. Simply, but elegantly presented, this M113 was among the many 1/35th scale entries. 8. Ed Harm's massive Jagdpanther A. 9. Duane Pfister's 1/16th scale Wespe. This is also loosely based on a VP kit. 10, 11. A Char B and a UNIC P107 Halftrack, both the work of French modeler Hervé Corroyette. He and a companion traveled to the U.S. just to attend the show. The models are scratch built in 1/16th scale and readers may recognize the Char B from its past appearances at Trucks & Tracks and Euro Militaire.



Mini-Mörser

BUSY THIS WEEKEND? HOW ABOUT A SKODA GUN?



It seems like there aren't all that many projects out there anymore that you can complete over a weekend. I think I may have found one. It's a nifty little kit of the Skoda 30.5cm Mörser. The Skoda guns are some of the lesser known guns in the Wehrmacht inventory. Skoda had been manufacturing guns for many years when Czechoslovakia suddenly found itself "protected" by the Germans. All of the available inventory was assimilated into Wehrmacht artillery units. The Germans had actually purchased some of the 30.5cm and the 24cm guns directly from Skoda before the war. The different types served actively in Poland and later in Russia.

The 30.5cm M16 mortar was sort of an old fashioned design, dating back to the first world war. The Germans really seemed to like it, although it was a

good amount of work to transport and set-up. The gun was broken down into three loads for travel and to set up the weapon it was necessary to dig a pit to place it in. The gun contained a complete turn-table base and all its horizontal rotation was by means of this platform. The platform rotated a full 360 degrees.

Believe or not, this is a brand new kit from MB Models. Remember these guys? It's been quite a few years since we have seen anything new from them. It seems that they caught the 1/350 scale ship bug and have done little else since.

The kit

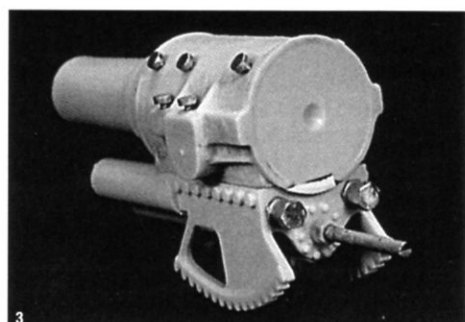
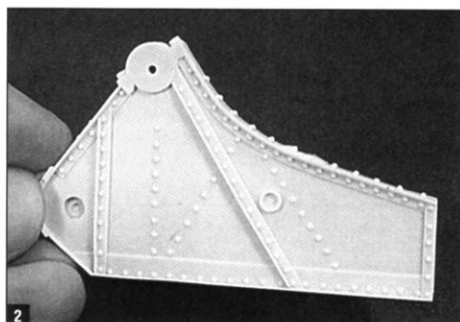
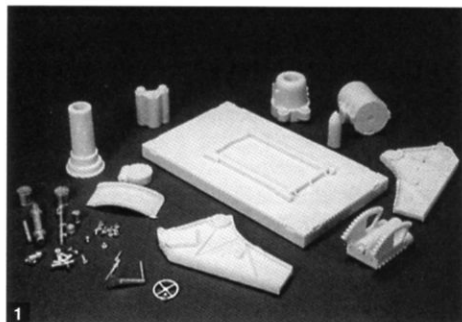
As I mentioned at the top, the kit is actually pretty simple. All the major parts are cast in resin, while all the smaller bits, like the elevation wheels,

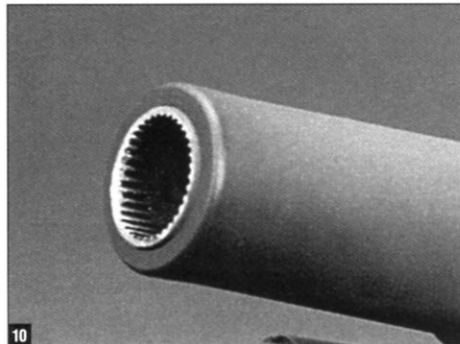
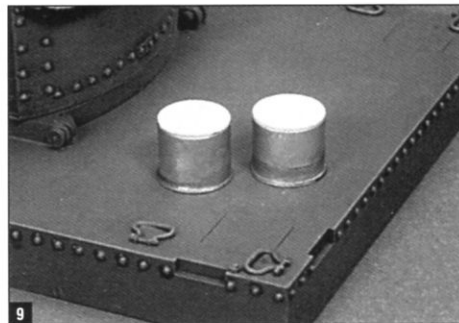
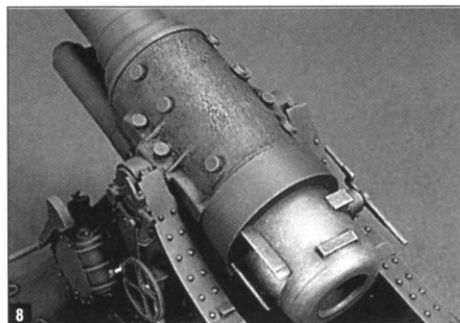
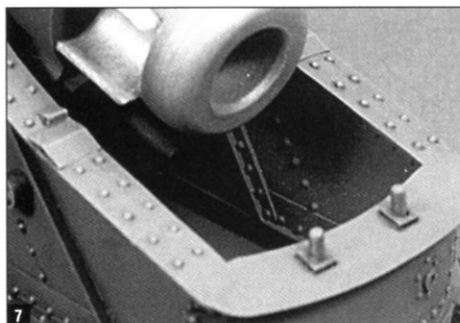
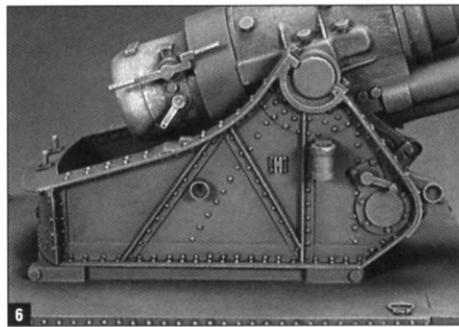
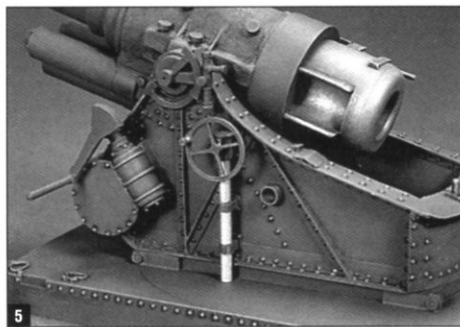
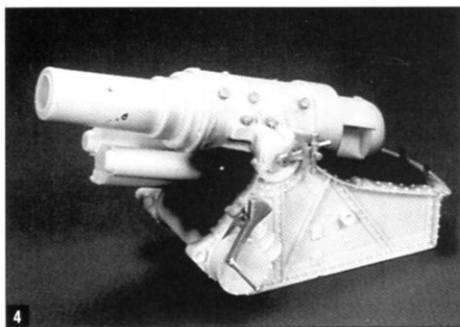
are supplied in white metal.

It's real obvious that this is an expertly rendered model. The detail is great throughout. I was especially impressed with the texture of the recuperator housing and the rifling inside the barrel end.

Construction is almost stupid simple. The toughest part about building the gun is removing the over-pours from the resin pieces. They all had them, but the razor saw made short work of them. A bit of wet sanding followed, but be careful of the thin edges on the carriage halves. They are beautifully molded, but are scale thin.

The gun itself is built around the recuperator housing. A geared lower portion is added, then the barrel and the breech. Everything located precisely. The only part that didn't was the front recuperator tube. I may have sanded the locating pins off,





1. These are most of the parts in the kit after clean-up. 2. The right side of the carriage showing off some of that nice inner rivet detail. 3. The main gun assembly during construction. The back of the recuperator housing shows a repair that resulted from an unfortunate razor saw incident... 4. The finished gun during painting. The interior of the carriage has already been painted. 5. The left side of the finished gun. Parts of the elevation rod were left in their natural metal color. 6. The right side of the gun. The socket below the trunion is for a crane used to disassemble the piece. 7. A peek at the inner carriage. 8. The cast texture on the recuperator housing. 9. The two charges. They were painted with Polly-Scale Brass. Note the detail on the corner of the base. 10. The beautiful rifling on the barrel end. 11. The cart put together from the Tank Workshop Mortar cart and the kit's ready-round cradle.

but just eyeballing the part into place was easy.

The tricky part was gluing the carriage and the barrel together. After adding the front of the carriage, I mated the carriage sides to the barrel one at a time and checked them against a flat surface to ensure they were both parallel. The curved back piece was added last and a small amount of putty was necessary to disguise the small gaps at the top flange.

I added all the white metal parts next. Most of them are really small and I (correctly) figured that I'd be breaking them off if I had installed them any earlier.

The elevation gear shaft mounts to the left side of the carriage and it extends down into the base. I taped two pieces of cardboard to the bottom of the carriage to protect it during painting. While the gun was off the base, I painted the area underneath with Tamiya German Gray (XF-63). Based on the few photos I had, the gun appeared to be a very dark color, which I safely assumed to be the standard German dark gray.

Once the gun was mounted to the base, I finished hitting it with the gray, then went back over a few smaller areas with a slightly lightened mix. In the photos I noticed that the elevation shaft appeared to be bare metal. Since it was cast in bare metal, I knew I was onto something. I carefully masked off the shaft, leaving the brackets dark gray.

The gun would not be complete without ammo and two white metal charges are supplied with a single shell in resin (my kit was an early one, so there may be more of this stuff in the production kits). A shell cradle is also provided and this would mount over the two prominent posts on the back of the car-

riage. A weird shaped piece of photo-etched material is provided to form the tray that mounts into the cradle. Two very small white metal parts make up the small roller wheels and a stop pin for the tray.

I noticed that in one of the wartime photos of the gun, an identical tray is mounted onto a small cart. This thing looked real familiar. Reaching into my "I bought it just because drawer," I fished out The Tank Workshop's German mortar squad cart, number TTWD1029. Although the wheels were a little smaller, it was a good match. I mounted the cradle over the axle on the cart and it really started to look the part.

This assembly was also painted dark gray and the added shell was painted Polly-Scale Black Green. A white band was added with dry-transfer material (from the area around the edge of the sheet) and a small number came from the same source. By the way, the white band marked the exact center of the shell.

The shell charges were painted using Polly-Scale Brass and the centers were painted white.

Weathering overall was kept to a minimum. These guns were very well cared for by their crews and fixed installations also seem to get more attention.

The model was given an overall wash of dark brown and the many rivets were picked out with subsequent dark washes. When all was dry, the gun was drybrushed with light gray. The breech end was heavily drybrushed with Polly-Scale Metallic Pewter and the ring around the rifling at the end of the barrel was similarly treated.

This was a great little project and I only spent about ten hours or so doing it. Well within the weekend time frame. Although the kit is a bit on the pricey side, construction presented no problems and I can recommend it to anyone with a moderate amount of resin experience. ☺

—Ken Dugan

MMiR RECCE

MB Models 30.5cm Skoda Mörser. Kit number 4501. Retail price \$85.00, plus \$4.50 shipping (U.S.). Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer.

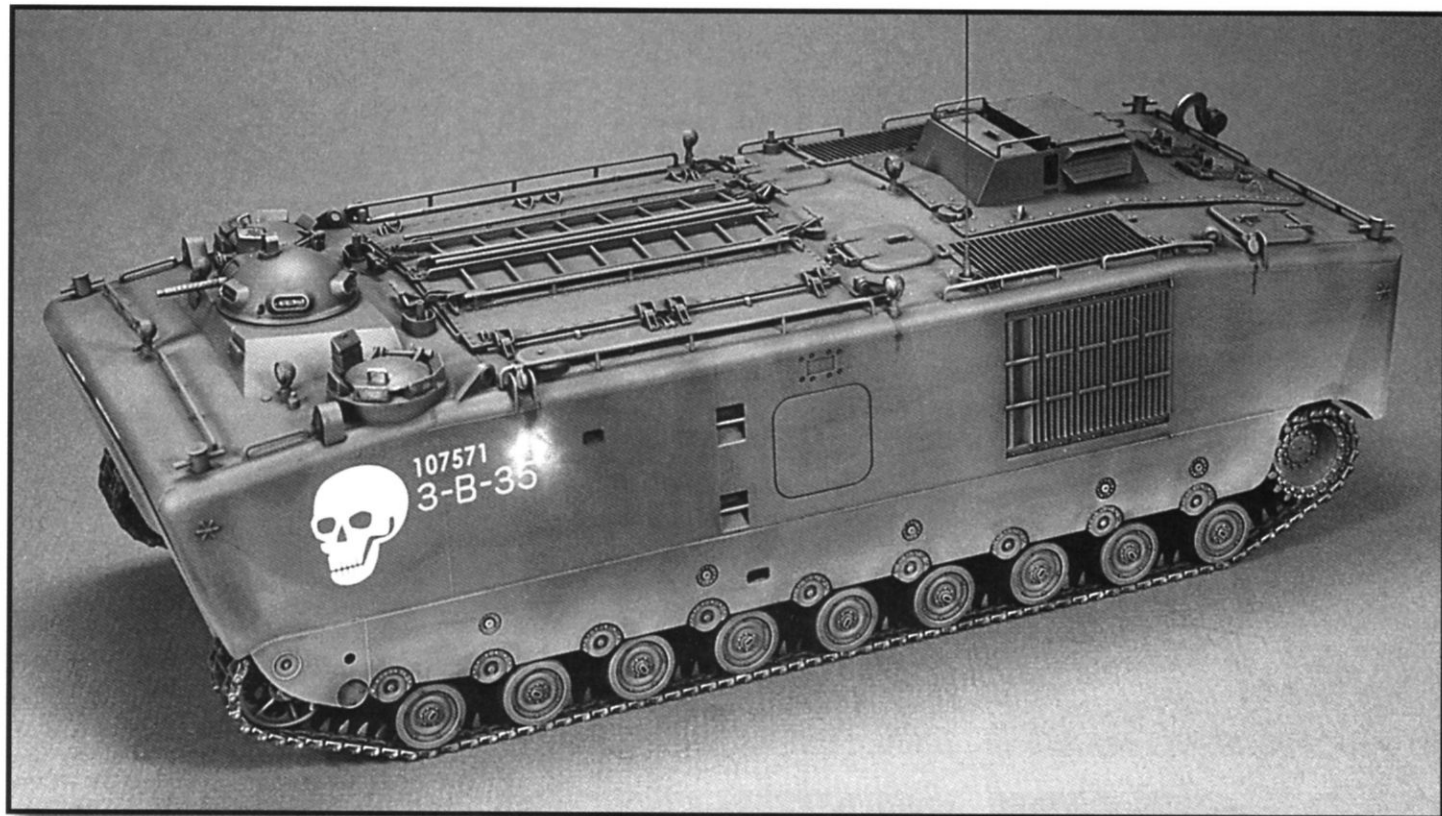
References

Weapons of the Third Reich, An Encyclopedic Survey of all Small Arms, Artillery and Special Weapons of the German Land Forces 1939-1945, by Terry Gander and Peter Chamberlain, Doubleday and Co., 1979. ISBN 0 385 15090 3. Only a few small pictures, but this is where the small cart is shown.

German Artillery in World War II 1939-1945, by Joachim Engelmann, Schiffer Publishing 1995. ISBN 0 88740 762 5. Pictures of several Skoda guns, including the 30.5cm.

Get on the Bus!

THE BATTLEFIELD BUS, THAT IS—ALL NEW FROM AFV CLUB



The Vietnam era LVTP-5 series of vehicles were the direct descendants of the WW2 LVTs. They were produced by Borg-Warner, who were also responsible for refining the original wartime designs.

The most significant aspect of these vehicles is that they are fully enclosed and were purpose built to take Marines from ship to shore. The vehicle has several unique features. The tracks were similar to the wartime paddle types, but the paddles were on the inside face of the tracks. They also used the same transmission as the M47 and M48 tanks which was meant to simplify logistics.

Several variants were produced. The original amphibious APC, the LVTP-5; a command version, the LVTP-5 (CMD); a close support version, the LVTP-6; an engineering vehicle, the LVTE-1 and an recovery version, the LVTR-1.

The Marines began deploying these vehicles in 1956 and they were common when the Marines hit the beaches of the Nam.

This wasn't the most popular of vehicles to those who served with it. First of all, it was huge. This, combined with the suspension design, meant that it was lousy for prolonged use on land. Maintenance was also a bitch due to the location of the drive train components. Pulling a tranny took a whole day.

Worst of all, the original designers wisely put the entire vehicle and the ocean between incoming

rounds and the gas tanks by placing them in the bottom. However, driving on roads in Vietnam meant running into Charlie's favorite toy, the land mine. The results were not happy and most wartime photos show Marines safely (safely?) riding on top of the Amtrac. Sand bags and extra MG's were also a common sight.

LVTP-5: it's a brick—house

Of all the armored vehicles I thought we'd see, this is about the last I expected. Its announcement was a surprise and its release an even bigger one. Given the experience of the AFV Club M18, I thought we'd have a while to wait. Not even six months elapsed between its announcement and its release.

Well, I'm glad to have it, whatever the circumstances. It fills a real obscure gap in Vietnam era armor. It's also a damn nice kit. Think M88 here and not M18. The level of detail throughout is great.

First impressions when opening the box are that this is going to be big (it is). The large hull bottom and sides jump right out at you. It looks pretty simple to build (it's not).

AFV Club has put a lot of work into the suspension of this model and this is where the fun starts. Each side gets no less than eight finely detailed torsilastic (great word, huh?) suspension units and each of these is made up of four parts. The sprocket and idler are also beautifully detailed.

This is a fair amount of happy work time, as all

of it needs to be cleaned up and sub-assembled.

Watch out for parts G11 and G12, These are the front torsion arms and they are each different from the rest.

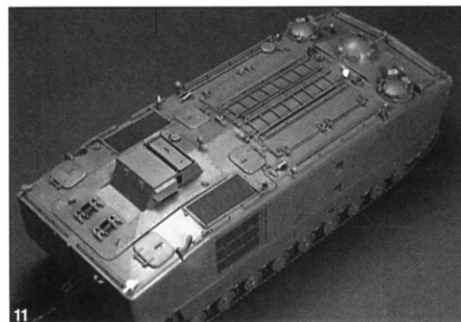
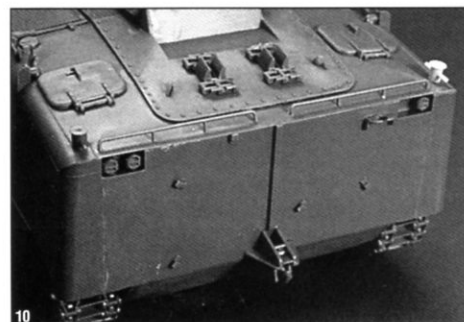
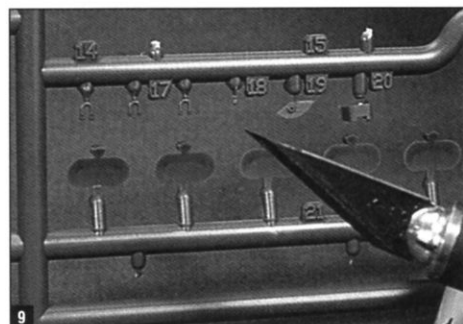
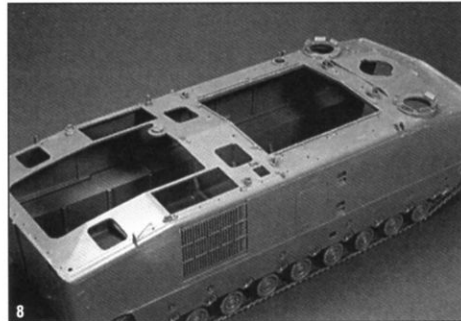
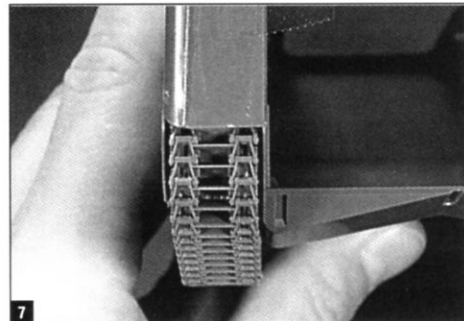
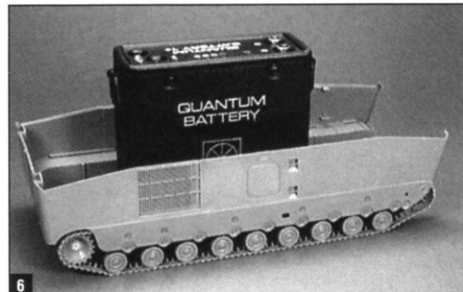
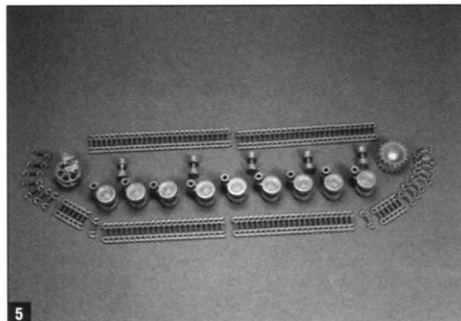
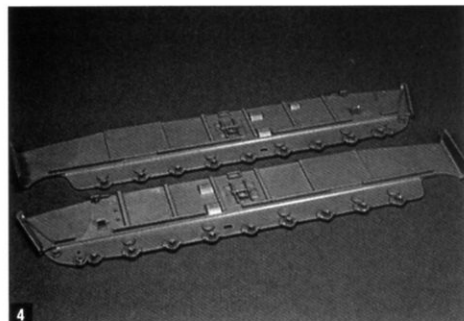
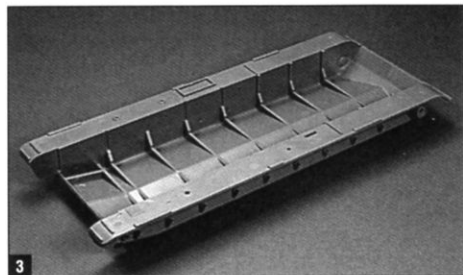
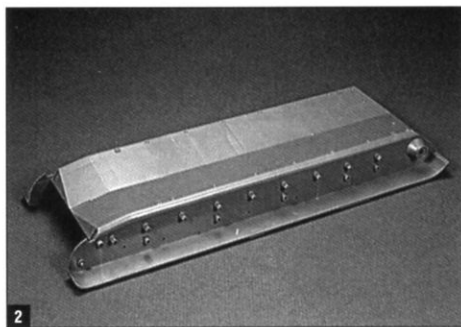
Just how much you want to clean up on the suspension is up to you. Virtually all of it is completely hidden when the hull sides are added. The most susceptible culprits are the return rollers.

Am Tracks

The kit provides strip and link tracks and they are gorgeous. The detail is crisp and the inner paddles are perfectly formed. They are also way easier than conventional link-to-link. Runs are provided for the top and bottom and smaller runs and single links make up the difference. Again, the top runs are anonymous on the finished kit.

Getting all these elements to go together is the real meat of this model. You see, the hull sides trap the suspension units, the idler, the return rollers and the drive sprockets in place. And, since the track is styrene it must be added to the suspension before all this takes place. Confusing? You bet.

The instructions don't really help at this point. I guess they assume you'll just know. It wasn't too tough to figure out. I used Testor liquid glue throughout and got all the suspension components and tracks in place. Be careful of where the single links go. They need to hit the front and rear road-wheels just right. They gently curve around the wheels and give the tracks a very realistic look.



1. The basic wheel elements. 2, 3. The lower hull piece. It even contained weld beads underneath. Note the heavy gussets inside. 5. These are the two hull side pieces. They are detailed on their interior face. 5. All the essential suspension components. 6. This is how I weighted the hull while all the suspension parts were drying. The battery weighs about 1.5 pounds. 7. Make sure the tracks stay straight! Check out that cavernous interior. 8. The upper hull in place. This is one, large section with lots of holes to plug. 9. Where's my Optivisor? The very teeny pivot for the .30 cal MG. The lift rings to the left of it are not much bigger. 10. More of those delicate bits for the tow cable. 11. LVTP on a stick! The finished kit ready for painting. 12. It's a long drink of water... The big antenna is from Minimecca. 13. The ramp's interior is fully detailed. 14. The completed tow cable on the back end. 15. It's big all right, displayed here with Tamiya's Jeep kit.

After completing both sides, I added the large hull panels. I also opted to add the back panel (A4) to help keep the sides straight.

There were a few anxious moments while I lined everything up. You have to keep an eye on the tracks to make sure they are straight and flat, and also watch out that the rest of it doesn't come apart.

I placed a large weight inside the hull to help keep everything aligned. I went around the vehicle and made sure that all of the wheels were making firm contact with the tracks. A few of them were already starting to set-up, so a very small amount of superglue was necessary to get them to lay down.

I then let the whole thing dry over night. Whew!

The LVTP is in the details

After adding the front hull and ramp and the hull top, the rest of the kit is just a matter of adding the large and small details to the enormous hull.

Like the M88, AFV Club's plastic philosophy is

that no part is too fine or too small to be rendered in plastic. I am highly impressed by this, as it means that the kit is practically super detailed right of the box.

There are a wide array of small handles and hinges that get installed around the large top hatches. Care must be taken when removing the grab handles, as they are all delicate. I managed to break only one.

According to the instructions, those large upper hatches get optional interior panels so that they can be displayed open. These are not in the box and I am wondering if an interior kit is inbound in styrene from AFV Club. The interior is completely empty otherwise.

AFV Club did its homework on the tail lights. One is a black out light and therefore should have a different top lens. Bingo, they got it right.

The top mounted .30 gun turret has what might be the smallest parts ever rendered in plastic. The three small grab handles that ring its circumfer-

ence are about 3 mm in width and the pivot bolt for the gun itself can't be more than a millimeter in width. Don't breathe while installing it.

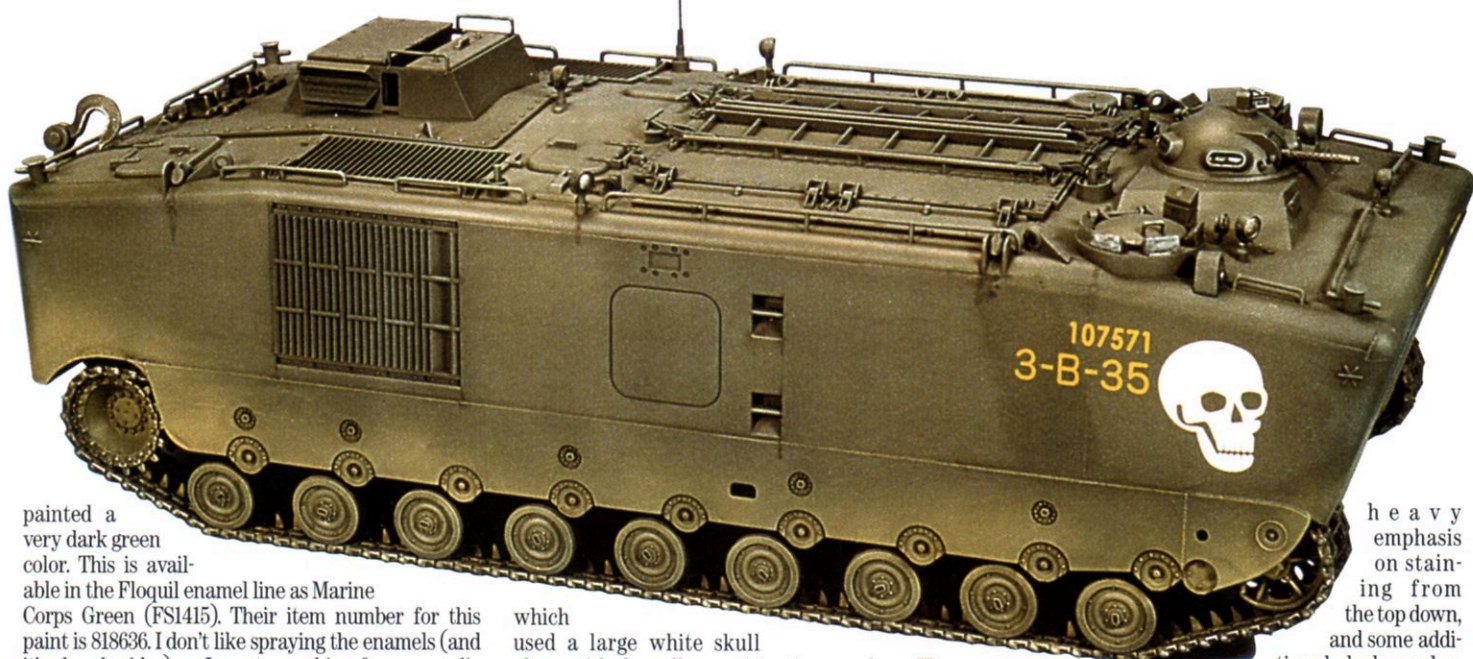
This phase of construction was pure plastic pleasure. The fit of everything was dead-on, flash was minimal or non-existent and the detailing is exquisite. What else is there?

Did you say Luftwaffe?

Painting the vehicle represents a few challenges. First of all, where do you hold the thing? I applied some two-sided tape to a length of balsa wood and then mounted the vehicle right to it. LVTP on a stick—YUM-MEE!

The tracks and suspension had to be painted by hand more or less. I started by spraying the area straight black. Once this had dried, I carefully masked off the tracks and suspension with strips of typing paper and Scotch tape.

Marine Corps vehicles of this time period were



painted a very dark green color. This is available in the Floquil enamel line as Marine Corps Green (FS1415). Their item number for this paint is 818636. I don't like spraying the enamels (and it's gloss besides), so I went searching for an acrylic equivalent.

The IPMS Color Guide states that the old Polly-S equivalent is Luftwaffe RLM 70 Dark Green. I'll be darned if it doesn't look pretty close. This color is now available in the Polly-Scale line and I just happened to have three or four bottles which I had never used.

I sprayed this on the remainder of the vehicle, then removed the mask and carefully sprayed the suspension. I used a template on the roadwheels. I later hand painted a dark gun metal mixture on the visible track sections.

Highlights were added on the LVTP using small amounts of white added to the dark green. The areas to receive decals got a coat of gloss.

Get your skull and crank up your amp

I used the kit's decals and chose a color scheme

which used a large white skull along with the yellow registration numbers. The AFV Club decals are thin and well printed and are a pleasure to use. They laid right down over the gloss and any carrier film was invisible once the kit was flat coated.

There is an amusing little typo on the warning stencil for the front ramp. It should read "STAND CLEAR OF RAMP WHEN HORN SOUNDS." Instead the word "ramp" is simply "amp." Rock 'n Roll.

Reference photos supplied by a buddy (acquired the hard way—in person) show the LVTP's with a distinct tan colored dust covering the lower hull, rather than the typical red oxide dust common to other areas of Vietnam.

I used light oversprays of Polly-Scale Mud for this, mixed with Dust to make the mixture somewhat more transparent. This also helps to dull down the bright white decals.

The vehicle eventually got a oil wash, with a

heavy emphasis on staining from the top down, and some additional dark washes around the side vents, suspension connection points and the top vents.

The many periscopes were painted black, then given a coat of gloss.

As a final touch the edge of the tracks were dry-brushed with silver.

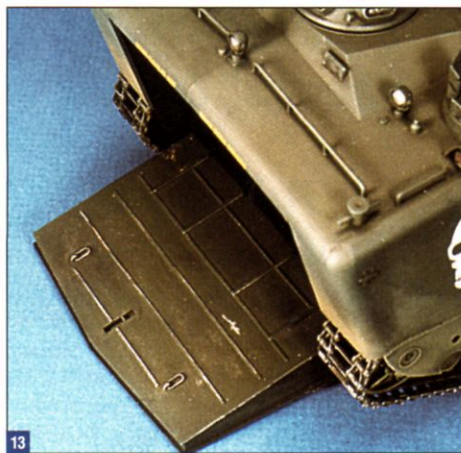
And finally

And that's that! I dug this kit. Everything fit well, the detail was great and it presented no real problems in building, painting or finishing. These guys get my vote as Tamiya's closest competition. Due to the way the sprues are laid out, there may be other variants released. The instructions even contain a cartoon of the LVTE-1. Although I'm not the world's biggest modern armor fan, I'll gladly build their next armor release, whatever it is! 

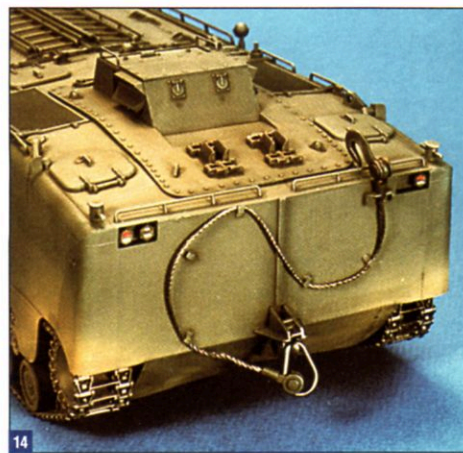
—Pat Stansell



12



13



14



15

MMIR RECCE

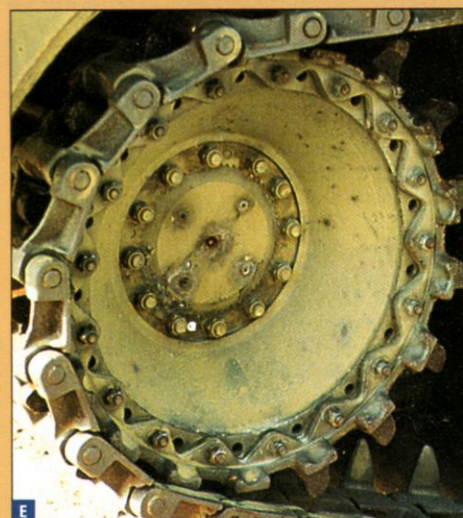
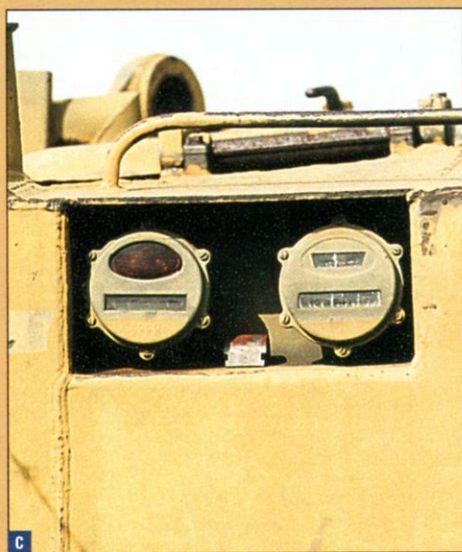
AFV Club Landing Vehicle, Tracked Personnel, Model 5 LVTP5A1. Kit number AF35022. Kit graciously provided by AFV Club's U.S. importer, Marco Polo Imports. Suggested retail \$41.98.

References

Armor in Vietnam. A Pictorial History, by Jim Mesko, Squadron Signal Publications, 1982. ISBN: 0 89747 126 1. A good book to have if this area is your bag. Several pictures of the different variants, including the vehicle depicted here.

AMTRACS: US Amphibious Assault Vehicles by Steven Zaloga, Osprey-Vanguard 45, Osprey Publishing 1987. ISBN 0 85045 748 3. The complete story of all U.S. swimmers. Photos and color plates of our friend.

Armor of the Vietnam War (1) Allied Forces, by Michael Green, Concord Publications Co. 1996. ISBN 962 361 611 2. Another staple for fans of the era. Six good photos of the LVTP family.



A. This Marine Corps track shows a number of interesting field mods. The most elaborate of which is probably the large armored superstructure build around the forward MG turret. Slotted armor plate has been added and a .50 cal has been mounted on top of the turret to increase the vehicle's firepower. Sand bags have also been added behind the structure. It is also interesting that the LVTP is towing a light trailer. It's amphibious capabilities are questionable! Also note the heavy staining and build-up of dust on the hull sides. (Carl Behm via Harlem) The remaining photos show two derelict vehicles. Both show excessive amounts of wear and surface fading and should not be used as a guide for painting. B. One of the square access hatches. Note the large cam lock for the cargo hatch at the lower left. There is a vehicle ID number welded onto the access hatch. Compare this with photo D. C. The left hand side rear lights. This shows the difference between the two lights. D. The large side access hatch. This was used for maintenance access to interior equipment. E. The drive sprocket. Super detailers should take note of the series of holes created when the drive sprocket tooth ring is bolted on. F. The front left corner of the vehicle. Several interesting features are evident here, such as the hollow cross member on the rope cleat, the weld beads and the wiring.

15cms worth of Hetzer

WHIPPING UP A CONVERSION ON THE OLD DML STANDARD



All photos by A.J. Greenland

Following suspension of the production for the 15cm sIG mounted on the 38(t) Ausf M chassis in September 1944, once again the front line troops demanded a replacement vehicle. In the fall of 1944 it was decided to adopt the Bergepanzer 38 chassis to mount the 15cm sIG 33 howitzer. The only photographed vehicle shows the use of an early chassis as found on Hetzers produced in the spring of 1944. There are numerous points to identify this early Hetzer chassis, the most prominent being: early idler; 32 rim bolts (16 on late vehicles); cross beam on rear; horizontal muffler etc. However, production of this vehicle would almost certainly use the latest model. If only a temporary solution, then vehicles returned for repair/reconstruction would be utilized. The clean lines of the Bergepanzer were extended with protection plates and a spring loaded protection flap to the front of the vehicle, as for example found on all self-propelled artillery that used this weapon. Fifteen rounds were carried in the vehicle, together

with a crew of three. Conditions within this small AFV must have been severely cramped. The combat effectiveness of a vehicle that only carried so small a number of rounds must be questioned but the basic 38(t) after six years of combat use was well tried and extremely reliable. It is reported that up to 30 vehicles were either produced or converted, but both BMM and Skoda have no documentation to support this contention and it is therefore rumored that Alkett were responsible for producing these vehicles. There is no proof that these vehicles ever saw combat use.

The New Connection conversion kit

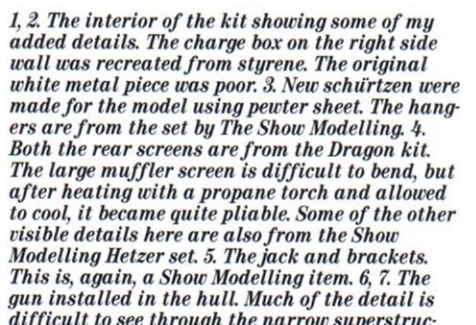
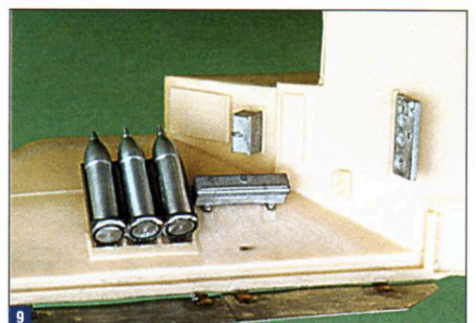
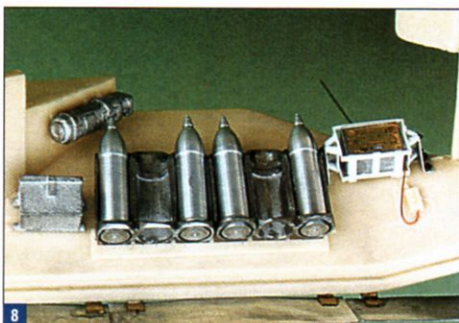
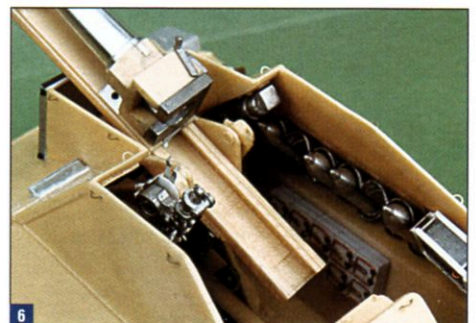
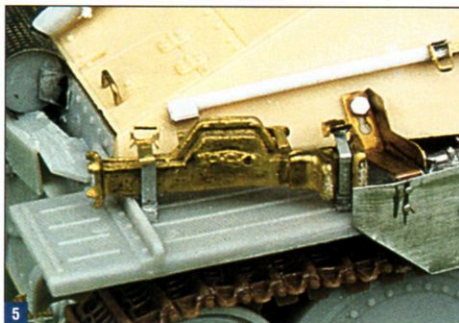
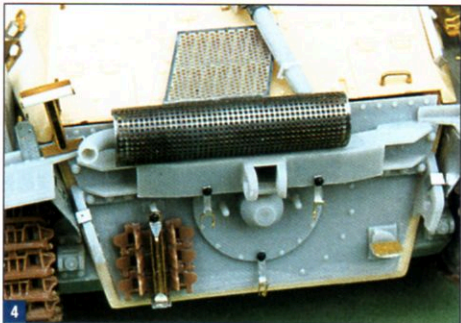
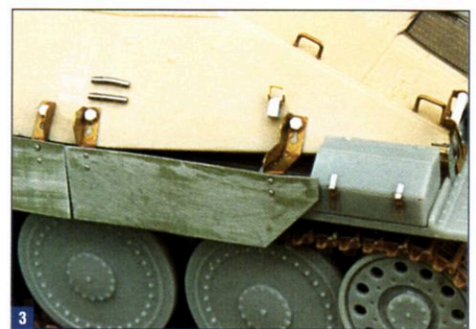
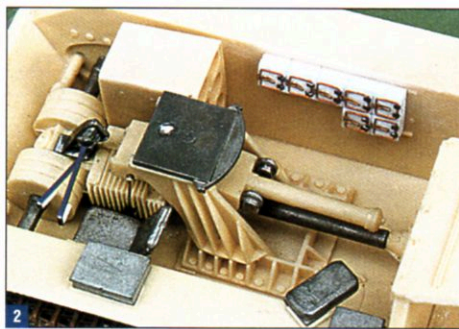
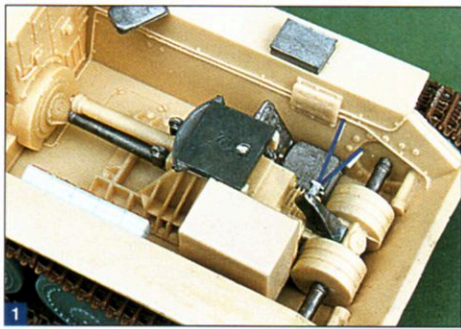
Despite receiving the kit in the early fall of 1998 I am still uncertain as to whether it is commercially available, although advertising lists tell me it is! NC3502 weighs in as their most expensive kit, costing approximately \$60.00. As this is only a conversion kit, you will need to purchase one of Dragon's Hetzer kits. I used Kit number 6030, an early Hetzer at \$35 (UK prices). If you wish to tool up your model

with ammo, then that's another \$10. Accepting that plastic kits in the U.S. are cheaper than over here, the model still ends up being nearly \$100, and that is a very expensive model!

It is unfortunate that the modeler is forced to purchase the Dragon kit for little more than the running gear and rear plate. So much of the plastic kit is consigned to the spares box. Could not New Connection provide these parts to make a complete kit?

The upper and lower hull are cast in light tan resin. The quality and fit are excellent.

However, due to the thinness of the resin my upper hull was distorted. Heat, either boiling water or a hair drier, should be used with extreme caution to realign any disfigurement. Whilst the thinness of the resin caused the distortion, equally it was ultimately easy to bend to shape and superglue in position. The kit uses a combination of materials, mostly resin and white metal, with a turned aluminum barrel. The quality of the resin is generally very good, the white metal poor and the turned barrel outstanding.



Before starting to construct the model I would suggest the following sequences be adopted. The plans given with the model are poor, confusing and, in places, completely wrong! Even well drawn plans from cottage industry manufacturers rarely give you the sequence of construction. I divided the construction into three distinct phases, ultimately related to the ease of painting. For open topped vehicles this is the prime consideration. It is no good having a beautifully detailed and constructed vehicle if you don't have access to paint it.

(i) Lower hull; including all external detail, i.e. wheels, tracks, hull rear and all internal detail, including the gun base plate.

(ii) Upper hull, again including all external detail, i.e. Schürzen, front spring loaded protection plate, all internal detail.

(iii) Gun assembly.

Phase I

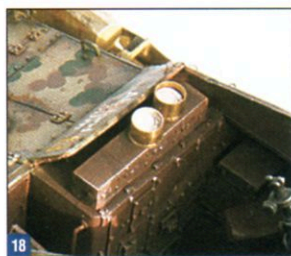
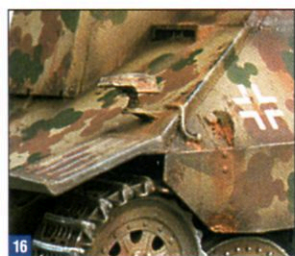
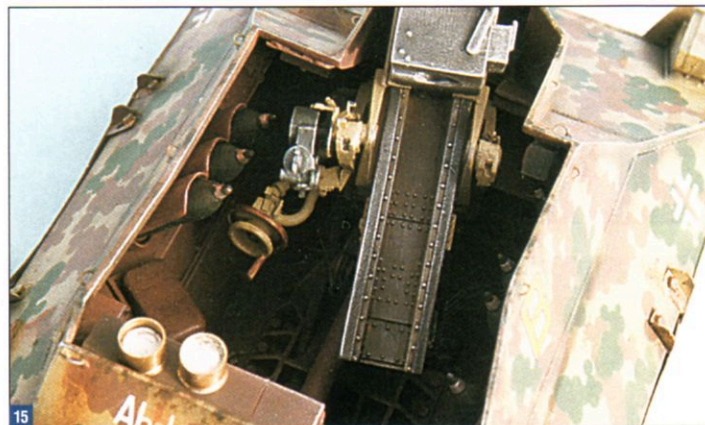
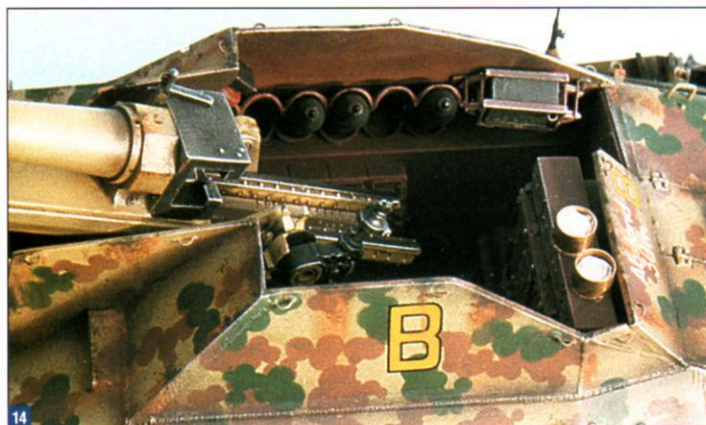
The locating points for the suspension arms are accurately positioned, in fact, the lower hull is probably a copy of the Dragon model. The Dragon instruction sheet for parts 1 to 5 should be followed. I used super glue on resin/plastic, and ordinary plastic solvent on plastic/plastic. I substituted ModelKasten track SK28 for the supplied tracks. Frankly, I am unable to understand why ModelKasten's production of tracks is almost entirely devoted to these movable tracks... for a static model? Or do our Japanese friends still push their models around on the carpets? Their static tracks are every bit as detailed as their more expensive moveable brothers. Once in position I glued the tracks where ever they came into contact with other plastic parts. If the tracks have a little slack, all the better, you will be surprised how much plastic contracts over a period of time. Please note that the Dragon tracks are more than acceptable. Also

1, 2. The interior of the kit showing some of my added details. The charge box on the right side wall was recreated from styrene. The original white metal piece was poor. 3. New schürzen were made for the model using pewter sheet. The hangers are from the set by The Show Modelling. 4. Both the rear screens are from the Dragon kit. The large muffler screen is difficult to bend, but after heating with a propane torch and allowed to cool, it became quite pliable. Some of the other visible details here are also from the Show Modelling Hetzer set. 5. The jack and brackets. This is, again, a Show Modelling item. 6, 7. The gun installed in the hull. Much of the detail is difficult to see through the narrow superstructure. 8. Inside (right) of the upper hull showing the shell racks and shells. The radio frame was formed from styrene strip. 9. The opposite side of the hull. 10, 11. The gun assembly required some additional work. The provided gun is an earlier variant and I converted it to the later Ausf M type. The elevating and traversing wheels were also remade.

50% of the tracks are hidden behind the Schürzen!

Skip now to step 10 and complete. Jump to 12 and only install the horizontal rear muffler. The Dragon kit comes with a etched stainless steel mesh screen. Stainless steel is difficult to bend and needs annealing (softening) to become pliable. Use a modeler's propane torch to heat the metal until red hot. Once cool, wrap the screen around a circular shape of equal diameter to the muffler.

If you can get your hands on a piece of vulcanized rubber, this is invaluable for use in bending materials. The rubber is very dense but ideal as a



12. The model was weathered using a mix of sepia extra oil paints and pastel chalks. 13. Note the difference in color between the breech and the rest of the gun. The camo scheme was applied using a pattern created with a Historex punch and die set. Tamiya acrylics were used throughout. 14, 15. Much of my hard work is not visible through the narrow opening. The markings are dry transfers. 16. The painted Notek light and lead. 17. The finished jack on the right rear fender. 18. Two charges from the New Connection ammo set. 19, 20. More views of the completed kit. 21, 22. The interior of the Aberdeen 38(t) Ausf M.

receiver to mold a shape identical to the tool impressing the metal into the rubber.

The rest of your kit is now confined to the spares box! How far you want to super-detail your model is personnel choice. For sure, there are numerous items that could do with it, i.e. the gearbox. However, I personally never model detail that is invisible once the vehicle is complete. I have even left off tracks hidden behind Schürzen! I made a new charge box for the right side wall, not only because of the very poor white metal detail, but the supplied box bore no resemblance to the instructions. I used my reference of the 38(t) Ausf M from Aberdeen to provide details on a number of items. Regrettably, the time taken to produce these boxes was wasted, so little is visible when the upper hull is glued on. This situation was aggravated by my decision to leave the interior in a red oxide primer color. Many vehicles at the war's end received only their red primer interior (and exterior). The ergonomics of an off white interior was academic, with the likely life expectancy of the Panzer units at this time. Even after dry-brushing, very little of the interior is visible.

Whilst painting will conclude this article, it is worth commenting that once the upper and lower hulls were completed they were primed with an automotive acrylic primer. Once cured, a oxide red acrylic (Tamiya) was mixed and sprayed. Dry

brushing completed the process, but once the upper hull was dry fitted to the lower, very little could be observed (or appreciated).

If the reader thinks that I have installed too much detail, then for ease of painting he should consider breaking the model down into sub-assemblies. I generally complete the construction of my model, then paint; rarely, other than flags, etc., do I add after the main painting is complete.

Phase II

The internal upper detail is fairly simple, with mostly shell holders and radio. Again, I constructed a scratch radio and frame. Despite its prominent position, very little can be seen due to the sloping internal plate. Using dry run techniques, I ensured that the exhaust pipe fitted the muffler attached to the lower hull rear. Rather than use the plastic Schürzen, I remade these in pewter sheet, using the kit's as templates. Schürzen hangers from The Show Modellings etched Hetzer set were super glued to the hull and then the plates added.

The pewter is ideal for this use, it is far stronger than lead and yet still can be easily battle damaged.

The spring loaded front shield was made from printers aluminum sheet. At 0.1mm, this material has largely superseded my love for brass. Stronger than plastic card but not as rigid as brass, it is ideal. The sheet can be gently scored, bent and perfect

crisp, clean edges produced.

Phase III

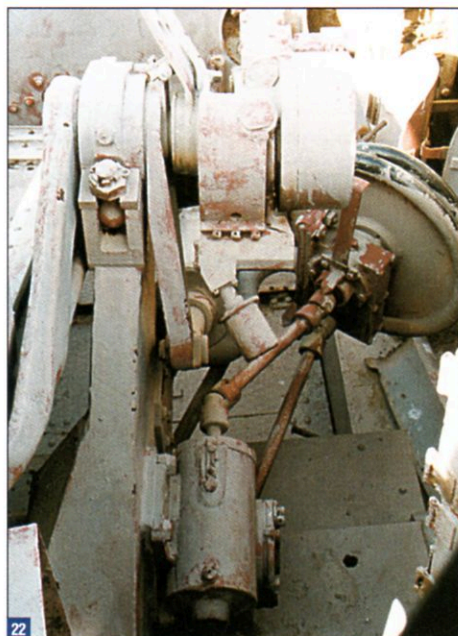
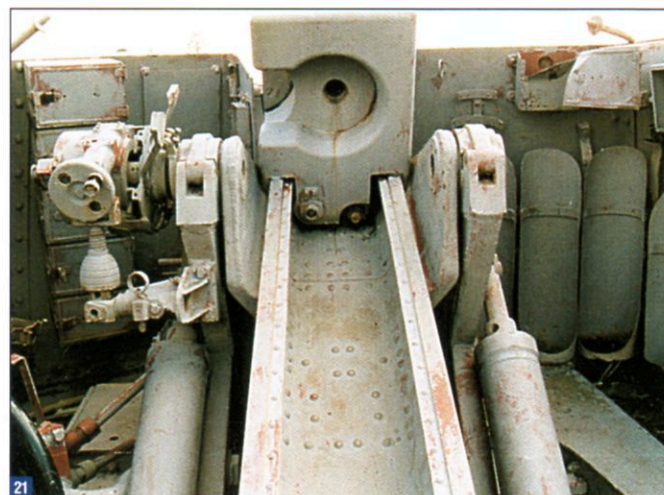
The gun assembly also needs some additional work. The supplied gun is inaccurate to the extent that is detailed on the early field howitzer, as found for example on the Ausf H Grille. In addition to updating the gun to the Ausf M type, I found the choice of three materials for the gun and breech unnecessary. Whilst the barrel is an excellent aluminum lathe turn example, the breech block is two piece, white metal and resin! This is an unnecessarily difficult casting. Added to this is the complication of removing the joint line between the resin and white metal. Only by careful and progressive filling with superglue, followed by very gentle wet and dry sanding, was I able to produce a good finish. Remember that when sanding two different materials glued together it is easy to end up with excessive removal of the softer material.

Use the Aberdeen reference photograph to update the breech block.

From the progress photographs you can observe that I remade the elevating and traversing wheels. Once again, largely masked once installed!

Painting

The internals should by now have been painted. Carefully super glue the upper and lower hull together. The model is now ready for external



prime and paint. I filled the internals with tissue paper to mask whilst I primed the vehicle with the acrylic primer (white). This particular primer is excellent. It is touch dry within ten minutes and over the course of the following 24 hours the primer shrinks onto the detail. After curing for 24 hours you have a hard wearing, satin finished model ready for the finishing coats. I am totally committed to the use of Tamiya acrylics on my models. This is mostly because of its ease of use with my airbrush. As usual, for scale effect I added 30% white to XF-60 Dark Yellow.

The scalloped ambush scheme was my second attempt after a disaster at a hard edged scheme using masking fluid that had more the properties of super glue!!

With masking film and a Historex punch and die set I made four or five patterns which I alternated around the vehicle. For ease I used two air brushes at very low pressure setting. Recesses were air-brushed with a weak mixture of sepia extra oil paints and thinners (20/80).

I have become increasingly aware that my vehicles are too pretty and therefore, after seventeen years of one particular style, I am attempting a new weathering technique for me!

I took a small bristle brush and cut down the hairs to approx. 5mm. Using an acrylic dark brown, I removed the majority of the paint in the same

manner as dry-brushing. Limiting my efforts to only edges, etc., I randomly stippled the abraded areas. I then ground down to a fine dust orange pastel chalk. Using Tamiya thinners as a medium, I again stippled the area previously painted. This dries in a few seconds. It will appear too bright, but use a flat sable to bend the brightness down. I am still attempting to achieve satisfaction and I believe I still have a long way to go. The numerals and cross are from my diminishing dry prints store. Is nobody out there prepared to produce good quality German WWII dry prints? There is still an enormous market for quality dry prints.

Conclusion

I am informed that the instructions are to be

amended and the gun updated. It will however remain an expensive model that requires some improvements. All within the capabilities of the average modeler, but should we have to do this at this price? New Connection is a fairly new cottage industry manufacturer that has a rapidly (but sometimes difficult to get hold of) expanding range of quality products.

In 1999 the modeler should expect that all aspects of the product, from instructions, packaging and, obviously, the model should be representative of the price he has paid. In this model, insufficient instruction and poor white metal casting has reduced the overall high quality. 

—A.J. Greenland

MMIR RECCE

Dragon Models Hetzer (early). Kit number 6030. Suggested retail \$35.00.

New Connection sIG 33 for Hetzer Infantry Gun. Kit number NC3502 Suggested retail \$60.00.

New Connection Ammo Set 15cm sIG 33. Kit number NC3516 Suggested retail \$10.00.

ModelKasten Hetzer early-mid model track set. Kit number SK28. Suggested retail \$39.95

All prices are U.S. listed retail and may vary in other locations.

References

Encyclopedia of German tanks of World War Two Chamberlain and Hilary Doyle. Arms and Armour Press 1993 ISBN 1-85409-214-6.

Duske/Greenland Photo Archive.

Superlative Softskin!

WOW! IT'S AN M38A1 FROM THE GUYS AT SKYBOW



Lead model built and photographed by Chris Moskko. All other photos (and the model) by Bill Steinman.

The history of the military Jeep has been told many times; even once or twice in this magazine, so I'll be brief. The M-38A1 was the third generation of quarter-ton military trucks, and entered production in 1952. The M-38A1, also known as the MD, is easily distinguished from all preceding military jeeps by its high, rounded hood and rounded front fenders. The rounded hood made room for the vehicle's four-cylinder "Hurricane" F-head engine, which developed approximately 70 horsepower at 4,000 rpms. In high range, the M-38A1 was good for 60 mph on hard roads.

The M-38A1 was produced for the United States military until 1957. Production for export continued until 1971. In all, 101,488 units were manufactured. The M-38A1 saw active service with the U.S. Army and Marine Corps in the early days of the Vietnam War, before being phased out by the M-151 MUTT. The vehicle continued to serve with National Guard units well into the 1970s, and served with the Israeli and

numerous other armies around the world.

The M-38A1's distinctive round hood and fenders were subsequently incorporated by Willys into the CJ-5 in 1955, although there were significant mechanical differences between the two vehicles. Nonetheless, the basic shape of the M-38A1 would be the hallmark of civilian Jeeps for more than three decades.

Excuse me while I kiss the Sky(bow)

If you are familiar with Skybow, it's probably due to that old set of individual track links they made for the M-113 series many moons ago. Or perhaps it's for their more recent set of links for the M-109 howitzer. Well, gentlemen, it's time to get better acquainted with this Taiwanese company. Skybow has just released a beautiful kit of the M-38A1 and has continued the softskin frenzy that has recently taken hold of the 1/35 scale world. The first thing that jumps out at you when you open the box is that Skybow has really put some serious effort

into the kit. The level of detail is just outstanding. The molding is well thought-out, with ejector-pin marks hidden in most instances. There is very little flash and the fit for most (highlight the word "most") of the parts is pretty damn good. Construction is fairly simple, with a couple of significant exceptions noted below.

Power plant

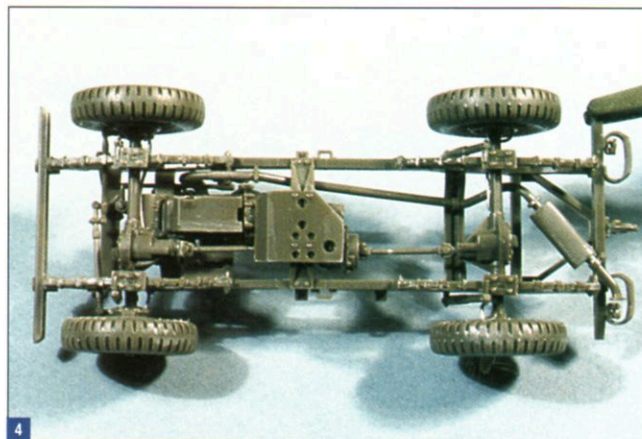
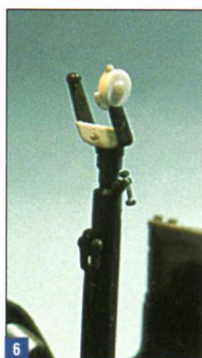
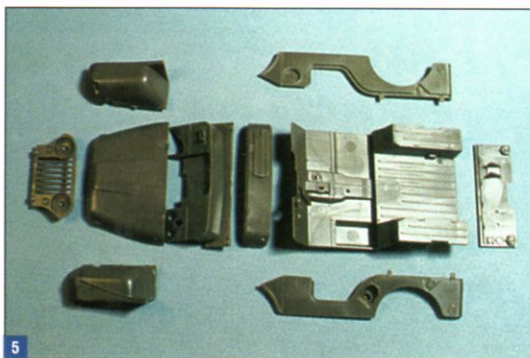
The first step on this little gem is to assemble the engine and frame. Skybow gives you a complete engine, transmission and transfer case. It takes some sixteen pieces to complete these items, and according to my references the end result looks accurate. Compulsive tread head that I am, I couldn't resist doing a little detailing here and there. I sanded down the fan blades to make them more to scale. I also drilled out the points on the distributor cap (part A21) and ran thin copper wires to the spark plugs. I used fine .22" solder to simulate various oil lines and a breather line into the valve cover



1. The engine, built almost out of the box. I sanded down the fan blades to make them more to scale. 2. The wheels. Once they are together, there is a little play, which helps the vehicle to sit straight. 3-4. The rolling chassis as seen from the side and from the bottom. I added brake lines using 0.22" solder. 5. The basic parts of the body. There was some difficulty in getting the parts aligned all at once. 6. I added some details to the machine gun pintle, including the large spring drum. 7. The tail gate. Skybow may be one of the few companies to figure out that the right and left tail lights on U.S. vehicles of this vintage are not identical. The right rear brake light is small for blackout purposes. 8. The finished engine compartment. I added spark plug wires, various lines and hoses to the engine, and wires to the headlights and horn. With the



right references, you could really go to town on this puppy. 9. The rear end of the vehicle gets a nice jerry can and a spare tire. You can't see it, but I added a little bit of photo-etched chain to the towing hook. 10. An overall shot of the right side. There is a lot of fine molding on this vehicle, including top bows, the windshield wipers, and the latches for the hood. 11. Another overall shot, this time from the left. There were a few bumps in construction, but this is one sweet kit!



(part A27). Before I assembled the exhaust system, I drilled out the end of the tail pipe (part A54). Like most U.S. military soft-skinned of the period, the tail pipe ends in a triangular flange to which wading equipment can be bolted. I drilled a tiny hole in each corner of the flange to simulate bolt holes.

She's got a nice chassis

The next step is assembly of the chassis and running gear. This is where I encountered the first complication. The instructions in Step 2 would have you attach the leaf springs to the front and rear axles, and then attach these assemblies to the frame in Step 3. After some test fitting—a definite must with this kit—I determined that these tasks should happen all at once. This will ensure that the alignment is correct and that the vehicle sits flat. Here is what I did for each axle to ensure proper alignment I glued one leaf spring to the frame using super glue. When this set, I slipped the axle under it, but left it loose without gluing it to the ore spring now in place. I then added the other leaf spring, using super glue. You have to do it in this order since there isn't enough clearance between the springs and the frame to get the axle through once both

springs are on. When the springs were firmly attached, I glued the axle to the springs using Slo-Zap super glue to give me some time to play with the whole setup and get it straight. Before I added the backing plates for the brakes (parts A57 up front, and parts A-8 in the back), I drilled but holes for brake lines, which I made out of .22" solder.

The wheels and tires were added next. Each wheel is made up from three pieces. One piece includes the outer part of the wheel and tire (parts A1 front, parts A1 back). A second piece (part A6) is the inner surface of the tire, and this gets glued to the first piece over a small circular plastic hub that freely rotates (part A9). There is a lot of play once this little hub is encapsulated; much more than you'd get with poly caps. I was surprised by this at first, but the good thing is that the liberal amount of play helps to ensure that the vehicle sits flat.

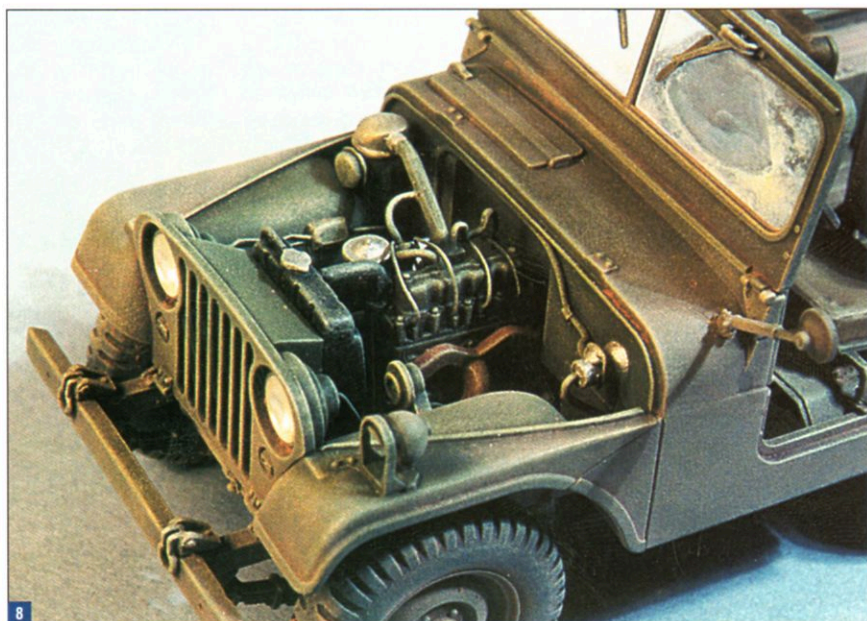
Great body (the titles are getting worse)

The kit's body is assembled much like the real vehicle. The catch with this is that you have to do a lot of things at once to make sure everything gets lined up properly (you can now see that alignment is the leitmotif of this article). The first step is to

assemble the passenger compartment. This consists of the fire wall (part B20), the cowl (part B1), the body tub (part B27), the right and left sides of the tub (parts B24 and B26) and the tail gate (part C1). Again, there were a lot of pieces to get together at once. On a Tamiya kit, most of this would have been molded in once piece. What made it all the more difficult was that the tub (part B27) on my kit was slightly warped. Liberal amounts of super glue and accelerator were used. Let me tell you, when they say use the accelerator in a well-ventilated area, they mean it; I still have a hang-over from that stuff!

I added the machine gun mount at this point, and jazzed up the pintle by adding the large drum spring and some other details. I also added a master cylinder for either the clutch or the brakes (my references weren't clear on which one) to the fire wall, and ran lines to it out of .22" solder. I waited until after I painted the body assembly to add the seats, dash board and steering column.

One nice little detail on the tail gate is worth mentioning. As you may know, left and right rear tail lights are not identical on U.S. military vehicles of the M-38A1's vintage. Skybow may be the first company to figure this out. They captured the



difference in the lights quite well. I for one am impressed. Skybow should also be congratulated for their delicate and detailed moldings. The top bows (parts C3, C4 and C5) are very fragile and must be removed from the sprue very carefully. They really are nice, and are done pretty close to scale. I, of course, broke all of the pieces removing them from the sprue. Nice hands.

An intermezzo of paint

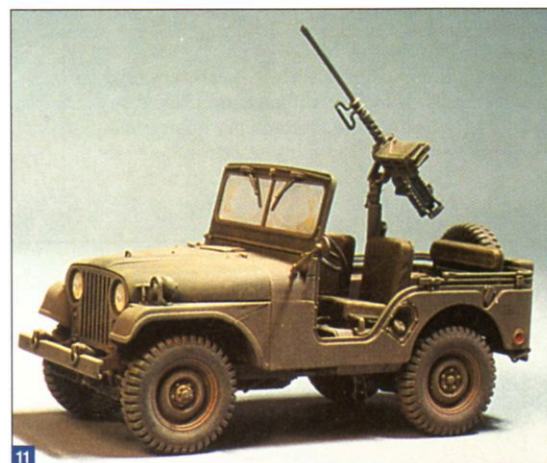
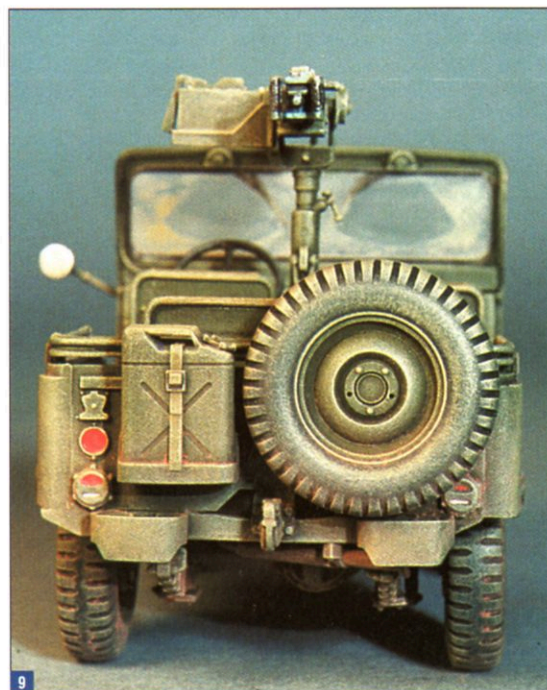
At this point I decided to paint the chassis and body, prior to final assembly. I also painted the front fenders (parts B21 and B37), the dash board (part B19), the distinctive grill (part B3), the windshield frame (part C8) and the hood (part B2). Since I decided to do a Marine Corps vehicle in the early stages of Vietnam, everything was painted in Testors Model Master Dark Green (FS 34079). As a rule, I shoot acrylics, and usually use Poly Scale. However, I didn't have any Poly Scale on hand in the desired color, so I grabbed a bottle of the new Model Master acrylic line. I was very pleased with the results. The color went on very smoothly, and was dead flat out of the bottle. It also helps that the colors generally match their line of enamels, which I

use for hand painted details and touch-ups.

A body that just won't quit

Once the kit was dry, I encountered the next (and worst) difficulty: joining the body and chassis. This involves gluing the assembled passenger compartment to the chassis, and then adding the front fenders and the grill. The fact that the body was somewhat warped really made this a challenge, and in the end I wasn't able to get everything aligned properly. However, as they say in the automobile restoration business, you won't see it at 70 mph (or 2 mph in 1/35 scale). To get the passenger compartment to sit on the chassis, I had to use a hell-of-a-lot of super glue and accelerator, and shout out a bunch of choice expletives. Once I got everything glued down tight, I noticed that the vehicle no longer sat flat. I must have bent the frame a little bit in the process. My real fear is that someday all that super glue will just give out—I'll hear a loud "pop" from the shelf in my workshop, followed by Jeep parts flying everywhere.

I then added the front fenders and the grill. To my dismay, the left fender didn't quite sit right, and required some minor filling to get the wheel arch



right. I also found that the grill and fenders didn't line up as I would have liked. I am sure this was all due to the warped body tub. However, once it was all together, I was generally pleased with the results.

I added a couple of other details to the engine compartment, including an electrical box on the right front fender with wires leading to the headlights. I also added an overflow drain hose to the radiator. With good references, you really could go to town on the engine compartment. The kit gives you the basics, and I added a couple of details to fill it out.

Final assembly and weathering

With the body all in one piece, final assembly was a snap. I added the windshield frame (part C8), the jerry can, the spare tire, the seats and the rear view mirror (part B9). I decided not to glue on the hood so that it could be removed to reveal the engine compartment. The hood gets two spring hooks that hold it down. These still are found on contemporary Jeeps. I must admit that I lost one to tweezers launch, and had to fabricate a copy from sheet plastic and copper wire. I added the kit's machine gun at this stage. The .50 cal. is nice, but perhaps a little on the thick side. The machine gun,

together with handles, ammo box and ammo box tray take up six detailed parts. Not too shabby.

Skybow gives you clear pieces for the windshield glass, which were on the thick side. These should be replaced with windows cut from thin clear plastic. I also replaced the clear plastic headlights with MV lenses, size L-193. The kit does not provide any decals for the gauges so I used a 1/32 gauge from Waldron to compensate. There are a few things that our aircraft brothers have to offer. As another little touch, I punched out a little piece of Bare Metal Foil chrome for the rear view mirror.

The vehicle received a black wash using oil paints and Testors thinner. When this was dry, I drybrushed the model using successively lighter shades of the base dark green. I painted the seats with Model Master field drab, and the wheels were painted PolyScale scale black. The kit decals are nice, but a little on the thick side. I also hate water-slide decals, so decided to use Marine Corps vehicle markings from Verlinden's Vietnam dry-transfer set. I did use the kit's decals for the vehicle plates located on the dash board. The Verlinden dry transfers had dried out—as they often do—and therefore didn't come off properly on the left side. I couldn't fix it, since the Vietnam set is now out of production. Everything was dry-brushed with armor sand. Finally, I gave the M-38A1 an overall dusting, using Hudson & Allen red dirt to simulate the ubiquitous—you guessed it—red dirt of Vietnam.

Let's go four-wheelin'

Overall, I enjoyed the kit. The detail is very crisp, and in many cases downright amazing. If I had any criticism, it was that the kit is built in a manner similar to the actual vehicle. In this way it reminded me of AFV Club's M-35 deuce and a half. In my view,

this approach is what gave rise to the two or three pit-falls during construction. Tamiya, for example, does not take this approach and uses state-of-the-art molding technology to combine various assemblies. The real difference is time. Tamiya's new MB goes together very quickly; Skybow's M-38A1 is somewhat slower. However, this is Skybow's first attempt at an entire vehicle, and I was down right

impressed with it. Once the thing is together, it looks great, and really plugs a gap in the ever-widening field of soft-skin vehicles. I highly recommend the kit to anyone interested in this subject matter, and hope that we see more offerings from our new Taiwanese friends. Happy four-wheelin'!

—Bill Steinman, Esq.

MMIR RECCE

Skybow 1/4 Ton 4x4 Utility Truck. Kit number TP3503. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price is around \$29.00.

Reference

I decided to do something a little different in conducting my research. Rather than buying the tech manual and running around to collect various books on the subject, I turned to the World Wide Web. There is a ton of great information on all sorts of military vehicles on the Internet. Here are a couple of Web pages that I found very useful in providing information on the M-38A1.

<http://www.off-road.com/jeep/tech/M-38A1.htm> This page had a great deal of technical information on the M-38A1, including links to pictures of the engine out of the vehicle, the transmission and transfer case, and the front and rear axles.

<http://hem1.passagen.se/lassemax/index.html> A Swedish M-38A1 owner's site, with pictures of the engine compartment, good technical and historical information and a photo of the rolling chassis during restoration.

<http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/1665/f-head.html> A good page with photographs of the engine compartment.

<http://www.film.queensu.ca/CJ3B/Poster/M-38A1.html> A page dedicated to the CJ3B, but with some valuable information about the M-38A1. This also included a photograph of the M-38A1 in service with the Marines in Vietnam.

<http://24.1141.53/An M-38A1> page with some technical and historical information, and some great shots of a contemporary M-38A1 doing some hard-core four-wheelin'!

While I'm on the subject of armor on the Web, let me take this opportunity to put in a plug for www.track-link.net. This is Paul Owen's outstanding page dedicated to armor modeling. Track Link has several discussion groups covering various aspects of the hobby. Armor modelers from all around the world exchange tips, techniques and their views on the hobby. A great bunch of guys.

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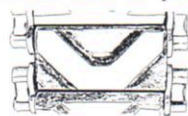


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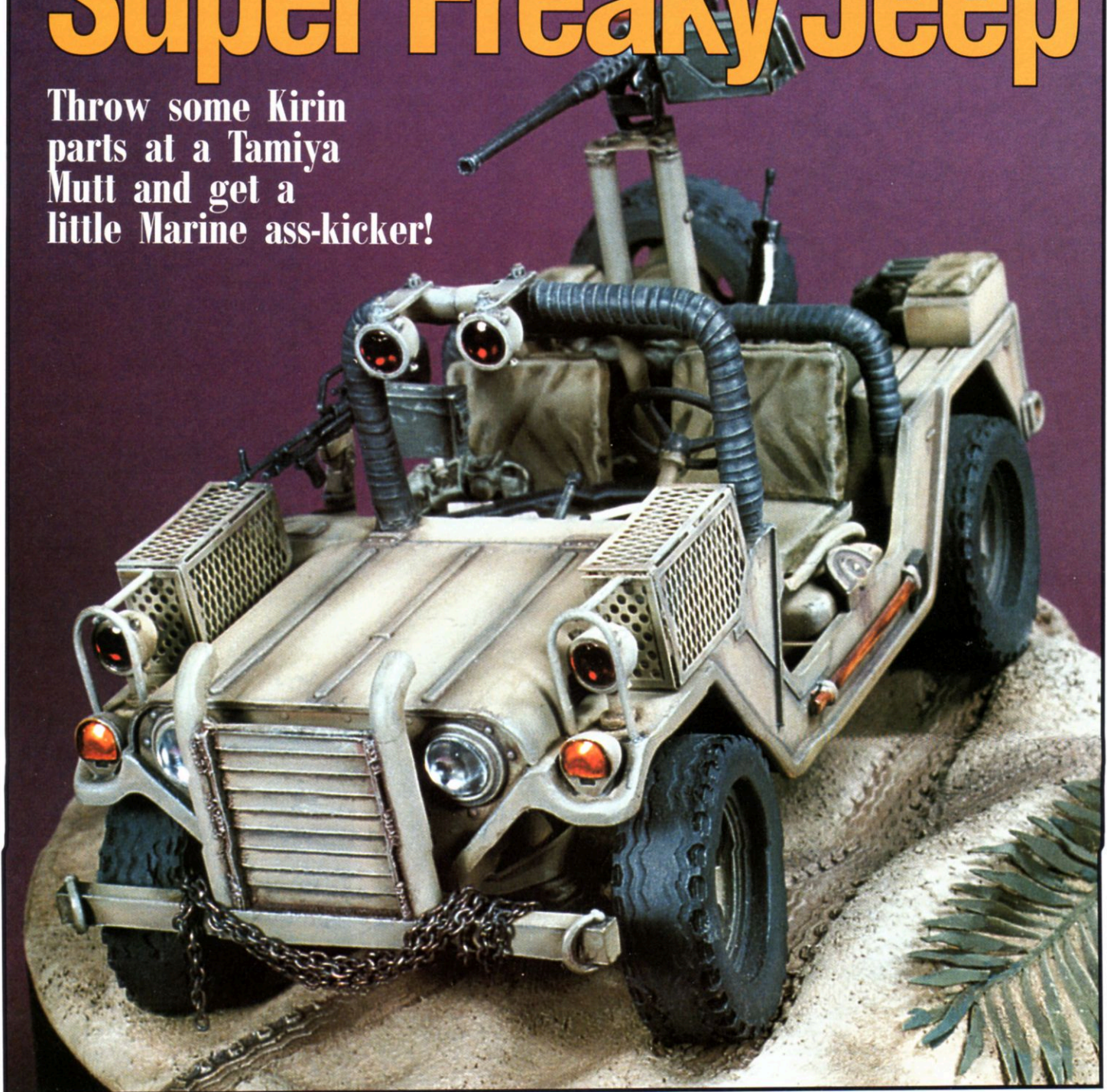


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Super Freaky Jeep

Throw some Kirin parts at a Tamiya Mutt and get a little Marine ass-kicker!



Photos by Chris Mrosko.

The heavily armed reconnaissance jeep dates back to the SAS in Africa during World War II. Today, the United States Marine Corps still uses the armed jeep for reconnaissance, only now the job is carried out by the Super Jeep FAV (Fast Attack Vehicle). The Super Jeep FAV is based on the M151 Mutt. It is outfitted with larger off-road tires, improved suspension, a roll cage and an external radiator. Infrared lights also are added for improved night operations.

To create a Super Jeep, I used a Kirin Super Jeep

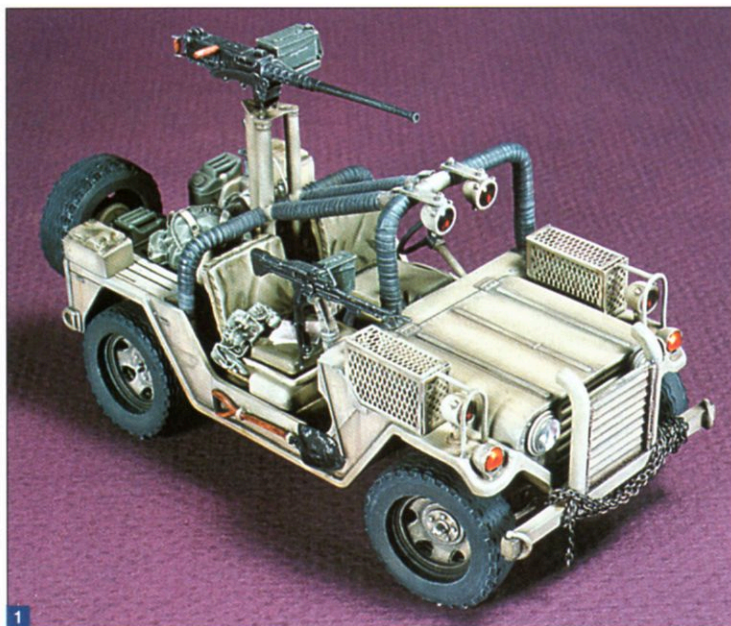
conversion kit and a Tamiya M151 Mutt. Kirin's kit comes packaged in a box with a color picture of the finished piece on the front. The kit includes 25 resin pieces, 2 photo-etched bins, wire and a poorly printed copy of instructions.

Jeep freak

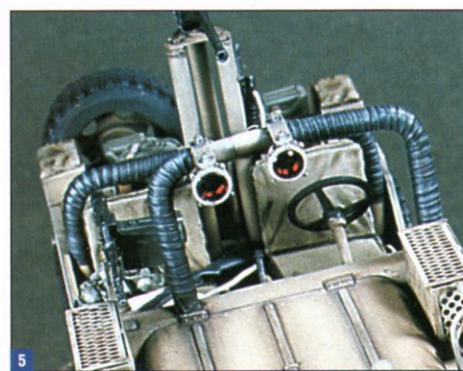
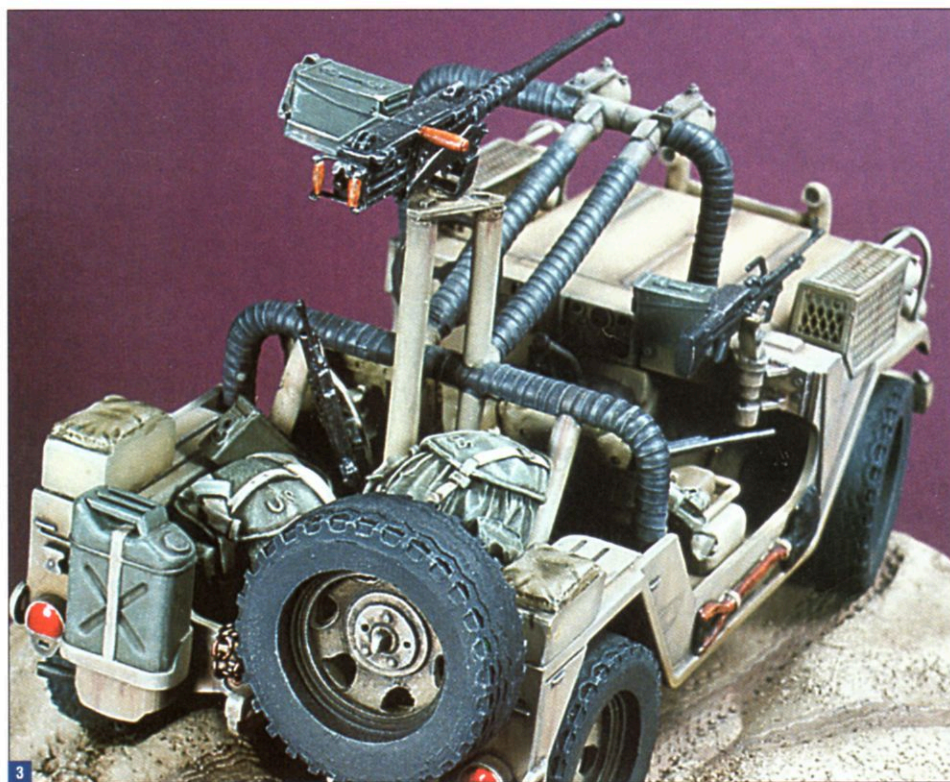
Construction began by filling all knock out marks in the body and rear panel of the Tamiya kit. Next, I assembled the suspension, which needs to be raised to accommodate the larger off-road wheels. Kirin supplies well cast resin seats that replaced

the Tamiya kit parts. I attached the seats and added photo-etched pedals to the floor. The Tamiya kit's bumper needs to be removed and replaced with the resin bumper and armored radiator grill. There is a new dash to use as well, and during this step, I filled the holes for the mirror and the holes in the fender where the Tamiya kit parts would not be used.

Assembly of the roll cage began with resin part #2 fitting on the dash. My copy of part #2 was slightly warped, so I drilled holes and inserted copper wire in the resin piece and corresponding holes in the dash. This seemed to solve the problem.



1, 2. It's hard to believe, but that's a Tamiya Mutt under all those Kirin parts. I replaced the Kirin M19 Grenade Launcher with the .50 cal MG from VP. 3. A good view of the roll cage. Kirin did a good job with the wrapped padding on the bar structure. 4. The headlight guards were formed using a resin template provided in the Kirin kit. The headlights are MV items. The marker lights were first painted bright silver, then given several coats of Tamiya clear yellow. 5. The IR lights are also MV items. These were painted with several light coats of Tamiya clear red.



Assembly of the rest of the roll cage was completed, per the instructions. One of the resin rods for the weapon pedestal was warped, so I replaced it with plastic rod. Kirin thoughtfully provided a resin template to make the wire headlight guards. This eliminates any guess work as to what size they should be. These were installed, along with the photo-etch fender bins. I left the top of the bins unattached so I could add equipment after painting. I then installed the infrared lights and jump seats, and left all other small parts off the model until painting and weathering was completed.

Color me Jeepy

I painted my jeep with Tamiya paints thinned with alcohol. First, the entire model was coated with khaki. This was followed by a highlight of desert yellow with a little white. A second highlight of desert yellow with more white then was applied.

Next, I applied a wash of thinned black oil paint, and a pin wash of raw umber, plus a little sap green around details. Last of all is a drybrushing with yellow ochre plus white.

To wrap things up, I replaced the kit M19 grenade launcher with a Verlinden 50 cal. There was nothing wrong with the M19, I've just always liked the way the larger machine gun looked on the smaller jeep chassis. Finally, I added DML weapons

and Verlinden packs and ammo cans.

This kit builds into a great looking model of a jeep. It can be finished in several paint schemes and is a nice break from building a tank. It was fun to build with a couple of small problems caused by warped resin parts, but nothing I consider too serious.

—Dan Clover

MMiR RECCE

Kirin Super Jeep Conversion. Kit number 28523. Suggested retail \$35.00.
Tamiya U.S. M151A2 Ford Mutt. Kit number 35123. Suggested retail \$8.50.

References

USMC Firepower Armor and Artillery, by Yves Debay, Concord Publications
USMC In Color, Europa Militaria #5, by Yves Debay, Windrow & Greene

Schwimmin' Schlepper

YET ANOTHER LOOK AT THE UBIQUITOUS RSO TRACTOR



In the previous issue, José Ramos presented an excellent article on Italeri's classic RSO. Produced by seven different manufacturers (the largest being Steyr) with a total production of 27,000 units, "the little tractor that could" quickly gained a solid reputation on the Eastern front for its abilities to tackle the toughest weather and terrain. In the last year or so, Italeri has finally gone back to one of their all-time classics and given us the other two principal variants; the snub-nosed version mounting a 7.5cm PAK 40 on a firing platform and the wooden cab version towing the same gun (two, two, two kits in one).

Ah, those crafty Germans—once something worked (or didn't work, in many cases), a bunch of guys in labcoats huddled up and tried to figure out how far they could stretch the concept. How 'bout the RSO with a SiG 33 bolted to the deck? Or the super RSO, with a fully tracked piggyback trailer that could seat about 50 soldiers? The RSO ambulance with a fully enclosed hard shell? The RSO dozer/snowplow? You'll find 'em all in Walter Spielberger's *Die Rad-Und Vollketten-Zugmaschinen: Des Deutschen Heeres 1871-1945*. And you'll also find the little one-of-a-kind prototype treat which is the subject of this article. (Fortunately, our bibliophilic editor had the aforementioned book in his collection, because when I

received this project, I spent four days not finding any photos of it.)

The book contains three very distinct snapshots of a valiant attempt to make a fully floatable RSO. A presumably metal boat hull was mounted on the RSO frame and running gear, with all things mechanical pulled to the front end along with an abbreviated exhaust system. It was preceded by the Type I prototype, a full tractor with the boat wrapped around it; rather like someone crammed a boat over the top of a regular RSO. This first design proved to be too unstable. The caption next to these photos clearly states "Um das Fahrzeug im Wasser sicherer zu machen, wurde der gesamte Aufbau geändert und ein Schwimmfahrzeug geschaffen." ("To give the vehicle safe amphibious capabilities in the water, the whole body was changed and an amphibious vehicle developed.") The Type II, though possessing strong possibilities, failed to reach production.

The overview

The New Connection team probably saw these same photos, because their conversion for the RSO Amphibious Type II is dead on spec. As shown in the photos, NC provides an all-resin job with only a handful of pieces. All you need is an RSO chassis and any of the three Italeri kits will do the trick.

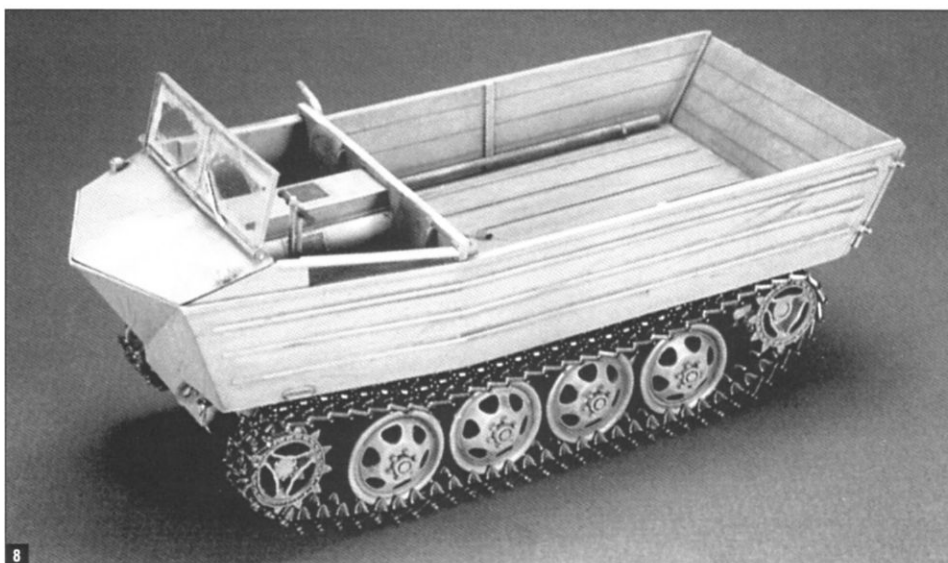
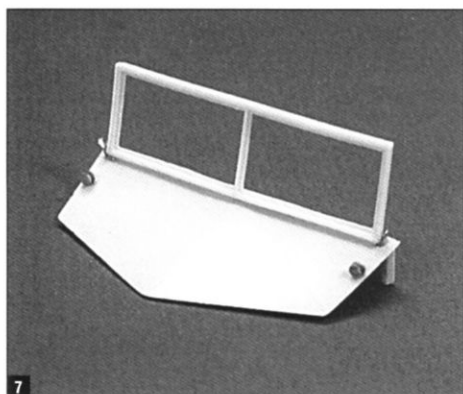
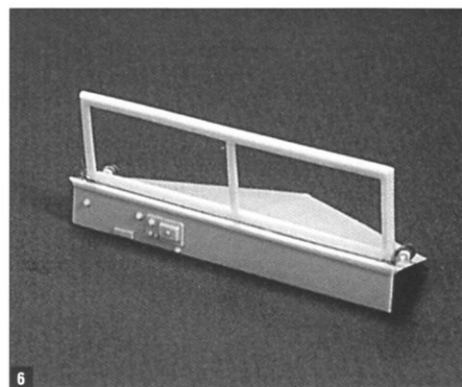
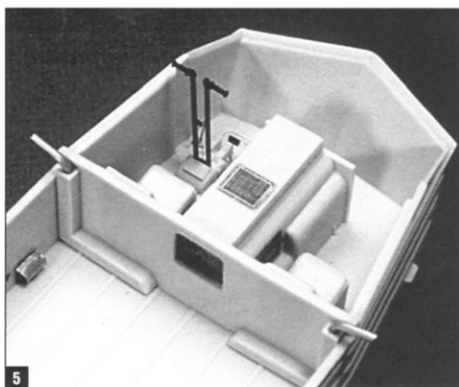
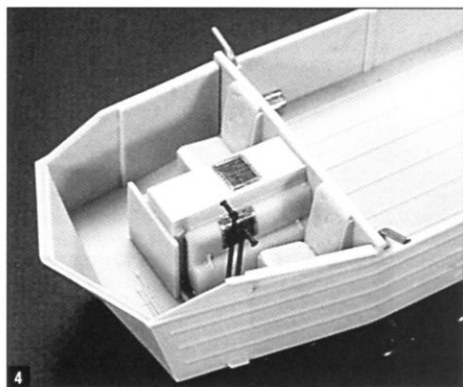
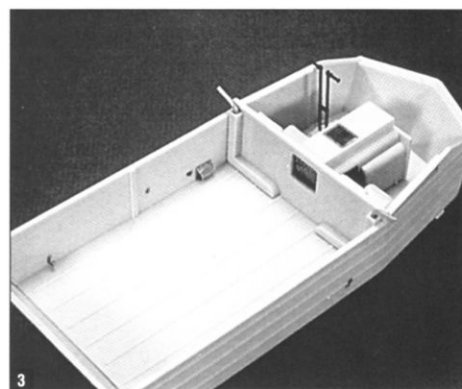
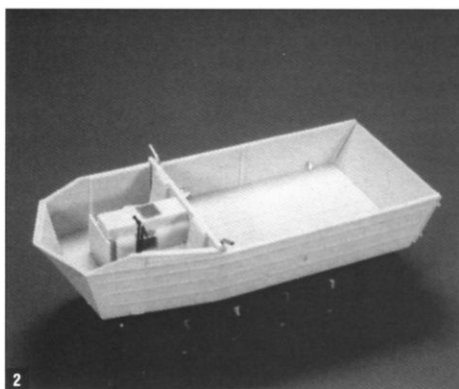
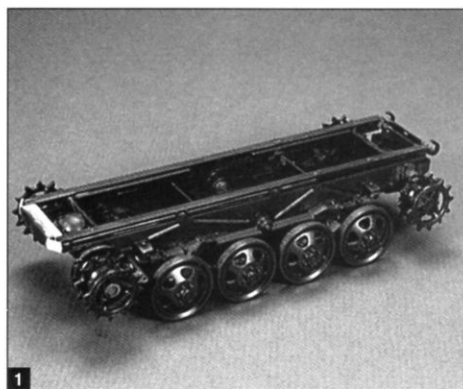
(Mine came from the original version, primarily because I found a completely assembled chassis, which I have absolutely no recollection of having built in the parts box.) If you decide to just merge chassis and conversion set, you will have the quickest armor model you've built since you spent 10 minutes slapping together a 1/32 Monogram tank so you could race outside and set it on fire.

So, let's toss in some ModelKasten tracks to make it more of a challenge, along with a few select details from Eduard and the parts box.

Just add water

The New Connection parts, as seen in the photos, comprise the bulk of the finished kit. Mine was cast in a most interesting shade of lime sherbet green. Cleanup of the parts is almost non-existent, with a few scraps of carrier easily whisked off with a hobby knife. The instructions direct the builder to remove the two exhaust stubs from the rear of the Italeri frame and add the new cross piece. I dropped said crosspiece and found it by rolling over it with my chair. This explains the white sheet plastic on the rear of the frame. There are four connecting tabs on top of the Italeri chassis which need to be removed to ensure a good fit with the hull. The hull of the boat mates snugly with the plastic frame and here's when

(continued on page 49)



1. The completed frame ready to be schlepped. The white cross piece is scratch built. It's included in the kit, but the part had a conversation with the bottom of my chair. 2, 3. Two views of the resin upper hull. It was such a pretty lime color, I hated to paint it! 4, 5. Close-up of the passenger/driver's compartment. I used a few Eduard pieces to spice it up. 6, 7. The hood (?) and the windshield. The brackets were fashioned from scrap etched material. The teeny headlights got clear replacement lenses from GREIF. 8. The finished model.

I went looking for details.

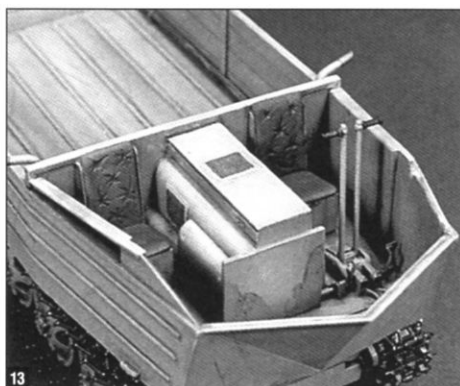
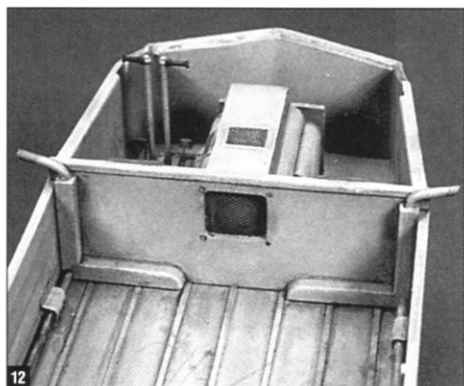
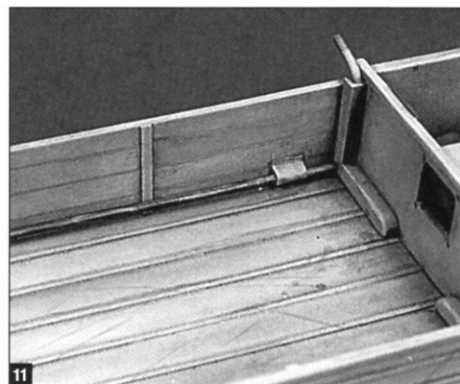
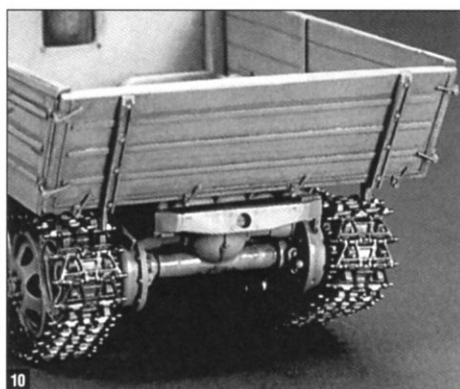
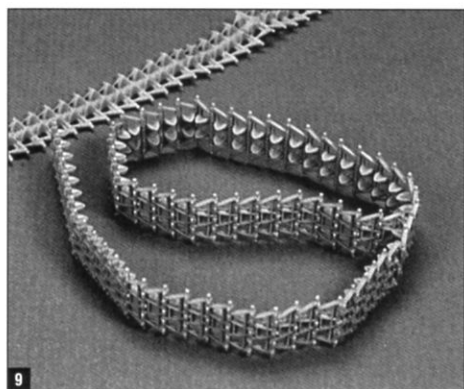
The tailgate has eight bolts which lock it in place and each of these bolts received a stem made from stretched sprue. These spin-off bolts are quite evident in the photos and would seem to ensure the watertight integrity of the cargo area. Just beneath the tailgate, I added a pair of what must be hinge housings; a rectangular scrap of plastic wrapped in lead foil did the trick. Due to some irreparable chips on the tailgate brackets, I shaved them off and replaced them with Plastruct channel and Grandt Line bolts. Aluminum tubing was curved and then sanded off at an angle to make the proper exhaust pipes. Three screens on the engine housing were sanded off, the exposed areas blackened with

a marker and etched screens from Eduard's RSO detail set used in their stead. I also used Eduard's pedals. A fourth screen on the rear of the engine wall was knocked out and replaced with screen from On The Mark. The windshield brackets were a tad weak, so I carved them off and made new ones from spare etch parts. One of the three Spielberger photos shows a pair of wooden poles in the rear, undoubtedly serving as gaffs. These were fashioned from plastic rod and I added mounting brackets inside the boat. Per the instructions, you'll need those funky pushme-pullyou driving sticks from the Italeri kit. With another three hours added to this project, I set about having the time of my life with ModelKasten's tracks (the ones with the separate pins, of course).

It was more fun unpainted

I was so enamored with that lime resin that it was almost a shame to move on. With the nose and

chassis still separate, I sprayed everything with Tamiya Brown to get a solid base color. Tamiya Buff came next, then Buff lightened with White. This is a close approximation of the light sandgelb which the reference photos depict. I let the paint dry for a few days, then washed and weathered the vehicle with artist oils. Very light metal wear (remember, this is only a test vehicle) was added using silver printer's ink. I wanted a look that said this baby had been run through the lake a few times, so I altered the wash to let it bunch up in some spots, then added a few drops of Tamiya Clear to the rear compartment to simulate pooled water. Note the black triangular recesses on each side of the driver's compartment; why these were painted black is a mystery, but you can't argue with the reference photos. The ModelKasten tracks were sprayed with Krylon Colorworks Anodized Bronze. Once the painting was completed, a pair of GREIF lenses (#202A) was added to the tiny headlights. Clear acetate was measured



9. The ModelKasten tracks. These are the separate pin type. They look great, but there's a lot of 'em. 10. The completed back end. I used Krylon Colorworks Anodized Bronze on the tracks. 11. The finished cargo area. The gaffs and their brackets were visible in the reference photos of the RSO. Both the brackets and the gaffs were scratch built. 12, 13. The completed passenger compartment. I left the dashboard/windshield element loose to show it off. The Eduard parts complement it well. 14, 15. Before and after shots of the Oberleutnant. This is Jaguar's Der Instructor with a different pair of hands and a Hornet head. 16, 17. Before and after shots of the Hauptmann. He's from Warriors' with a new right arm and a head from Hornet.



and cut for the windshields and Eduard's wipers and wiper controllers were added. In the Nuts & Bolts volume on the RSO, I also spied the large hydraulic lines running from the cylinders on the front drive sprockets and fashioned them from wire.

Making a scene

Wow. So there it is. All alone on the workbench. Interesting, sure. Accurate, pretty much. Colorful, hardly. Let's make a vignette.

A chunk of VP cobblestone street was cut to fit the wooden base. A group of wall sections from Armand Bayardi made a nice backdrop, with a few signs from VP and Plus Model. The Oberleutnant obviously talking about the schwimmfahig, is Jaguar's Der Instructor (63060), with a different pair of hands from the parts box and a Hornet head (from HH12) shaved down to accept Jaguar's schirmmütze. This figure, sculpted by Brian Stewart, is one of the definitive 1/35 German officers ever produced, with enough insignia, awards and detail to delight any painter. The Hauptmann, on hand to hear the analysis of the schwimmin' schlepper, is from Warriors' set 35069, with a new right arm and a head from Hornet's HGH11. The waffenfarbe piping on his cap and epaulettes is red. While this is

commonly recognized as the color of the artillery branch, it also was worn by officers in the Experimental Command. With everyone in position, more droplets of Tamiya clear were added to the ground beneath the vehicle to simulate runoff.

There you have it, friends and neighbors. It's a

quickie. Buy one to fill out your collection, or to have a really interesting project that won't tie you up for two months. Then take it to your next model contest and enter it in ships just to see what happens. ☺

—Joe Porter

MMIR RECCE

New Connection RSO Schwimmfahig (Amphibious Type II). Kit number 35110. This is a fairly new item and the U.S. retail has yet to be determined. Other similar items in the line retail for approximately \$45.00. A one-of-a-kind conversion to make this one-of-a-kind prototype.

Italeri Steyr RSO/1 Battle Tractor. Kit number 227. Suggested retail price \$22.00. Currently off the market, but usually found at a good vendor table. Look for a Peerless Max, Testors, or Italeri box.

Eduard Model Accessories Steyr RSO/1 Detail Set. Set number 35112. Suggested retail price \$14.99. All the right stuff for your RSO, including a few goodies for your new boat.

ModelKasten Steyr RSO Tracks. Set number SK33. Suggested retail price \$29.95. These alone will bring a whole new life to your RSO family. Remember that they're the separate pin type. They go together quite well, but there's a lot of 'em.

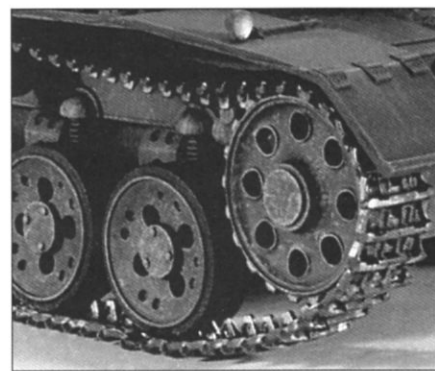
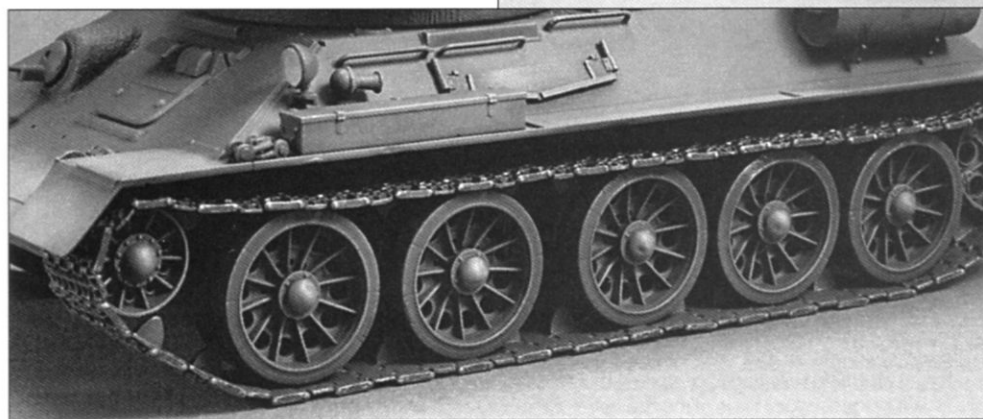
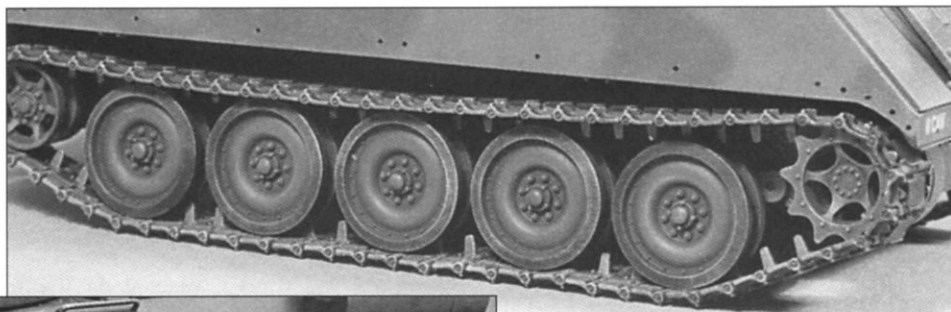
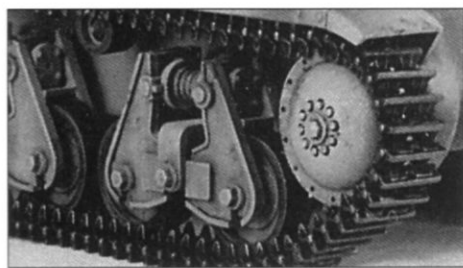
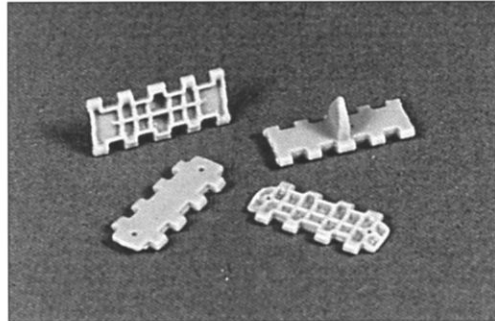
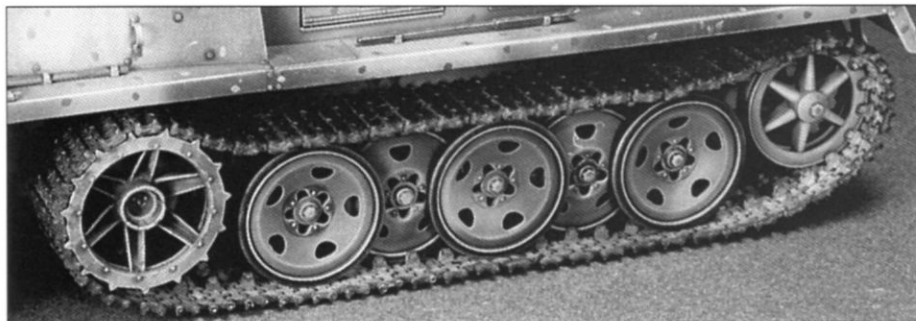
References

There are plenty of books with the standard RSO tractors, but here's where we found photos of this little beauty.

Die Rad-Und Vollketten-Zugmaschinen: Des Deutschen Heeres 1871-1945. Motorbuch Verlag, 1989. Published in Germany, with only German text. Lots of photos of the early years, plus the whole RSO family and several rarities.

Link-to-Link Tracks

PART ONE: YOU CAN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WITHOUT A SCORE CARD



Link to link tracks. You either love 'em or you hate 'em. It's a shame that the subject causes so much terror in the heart of most modelers. Their purpose is to enhance realism, not to piss off the prospective modeler.

They are a finicky lot. The very concept dictates that the parts are small and numerous. Sometimes they don't fit all that well and sometimes the desired effect is lost. There are many different types of link-to-link out there and in this feature we will attempt to sort them all out. In part two, we will illustrate a few of the tips and tricks we have learned around here that make these little wonders a bit easier to live with.

The history of link-to-link is an interesting one. Contemporary armor models evolved with vinyl bands (a progression after actual rubber) to represent the runs of actual individual links. At first these were crudely rendered, but they eventually

became quite detailed. The first armor kits with link-to-link tracks pre-date considerably the current generation of multi-piece goodies.

One of the first armor kits to include them was the original Tamiya 250 half track kit. This was a strip and link set up and each of the subsequent variants included these same tracks.

It was the Japanese that jumped started the whole concept of link-to-link back in 1987. A line of track sets billed as "ModelKasten" started that year with a Panther offering.

Not long after that, Dragon Models of Hong Kong released their first kits and one of their most prominent features was the inclusion of link-to-link tracks. This has been the case with all their releases since.

Tamiya also offered up their version of modern link-to-link in their 1988 Tiger I kit. Other manufacturers have also responded with various forms of individual links or strip and link tracks.

Track types

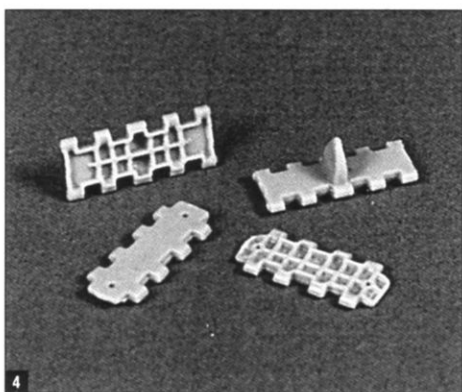
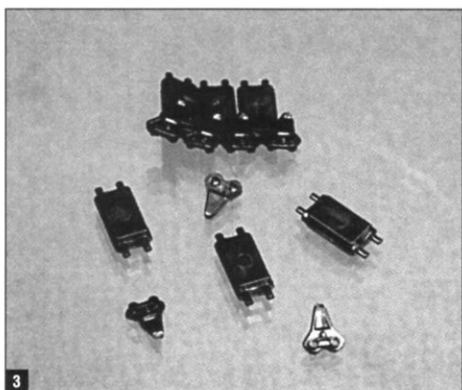
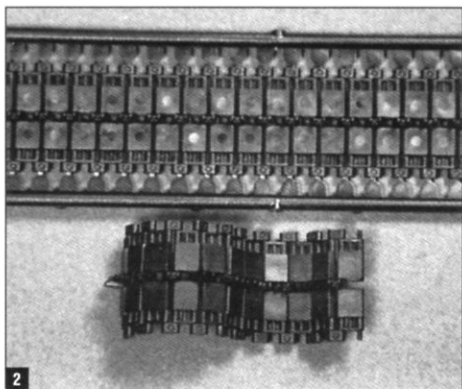
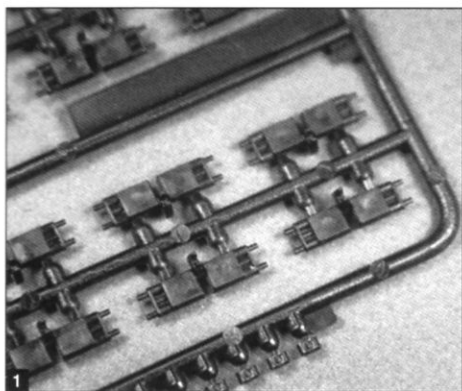
Let's look at all the different types of tracks available out there. There is a surprising amount of diversity in the material and methods of construction.

First, a little terminology. There are three basic types of link-to-link tracks available to the armor modeler:

A) Non-workable

These are individual links (usually plastic) which are glued together to form the track runs. These are typically assembled using liquid glue and care must be taken to work the links around the suspension to achieve the desired effect. Non-workable tracks are most commonly found inside full kits.

Some non-workable tracks are referred to as "semi-workable." This means that the tracks will still have some movement in the runs after assembly. This is most useful in positioning the tracks on the model.



B) Workable

These are individual links which are specifically assembled to remain workable. Not so that you can run your model around on the carpet, but so that the natural sag and weight of the real track can be achieved in scale. Workable links are perhaps the most realistic of all the link-to-link track types, but they are generally more expensive and take much more time to assemble.

C) Strip & Link

Strip & link is perhaps the oldest of all the types. The concept is simple. Long single pieces are provided for the top and bottom runs, while individual links are provided for the tracks that run around the drive sprocket and the idler wheel. Although strip & link is considered by many to be the bargain basement of l-to-l, if executed properly by the manufacturer and built carefully by the modeler, the finished effect can be as good as or better than the other types.

The real thing

The reader should also be aware of the major differences between real tank tracks. There are essentially two types of tracks used on real tanks. The first is the "live" track. This means that each link contains a wedge-bolt (in some cases two). This bolt, which usually matches an angled notch on the track pin, creates a pitch between the links and the cumulative effect is that the track runs curl. It is said that they "want" to curl, hence the term "live." This effect helps keep the track on the tank as the links are constantly forced in a circular direction. This innovation was first seen on the U.S. Army's M2 series and later on the M3 Lee and the M4 Sherman series. It eventually evolved into the T80/T88 series used on the M26/M46/M47. Most of the world's MBTs, such as the Leopard and the M1A2, use this system today.

Except for very rare instances, live tracks show no sag of any kind. This is important when fitting certain track types to your model.

The second track type is often referred to as "dead-pin" or "dry-pin" track. These tracks are extremely simple, being basically like a large series of hinges. Each solid metal link is joined to the next by a large steel pin. This pin is sometimes enclosed by a lubricated sleeve, like on German WW2 half-tracks (so they're not always dry). Dead pin tracks have no propensity to curl and often have a pronounced amount of sag. Certain types will expand during prolonged use and appear even more saggy.

These track types were often the bane of WW2 tankers as they needed a lot of attention to remain properly adjusted. The more loose the track, the more likely it is to come off. Extreme heat and cold also sometimes caused pins to break. The movement and vibration of a large armored vehicle could cause pins to work loose and fall out, resulting in a thrown track. Many tanks had simple devices designed to knock loose pins back into place as the tanks ran (look for a shallow wedge-shaped device on the hull).

Some of the most common types of dry-pin tracks are the Panzer III/IV and the Soviet JS series.

Dry pin tracks are probably best rendered in scale by the workable types of track sets.

There is a third, but rarer, type of track used on real armored vehicles. It is the "rubber band" type. This track system is actually a continuous band of rubber which encases two flexible steel cables. The cables are attached to teeth which engage the drive sprocket. Since this type contains no actual links it's not relevant to our discussion here.

Band type tracks were used on the U.S. M29

Weasel and the M2/M3 series of WW2 halftracks. Coincidentally, this same track system is in use on the modern German Weasel family of air-mobile anti-tank and support vehicles.

The manufacturers

Academy offers a full set of early style non-workable link-to-link tracks in its extravagantly detailed kit of the early Tiger I. These are also available as separate items.

Being the earlier double groove pattern, they represent an excellent value at \$8.50.

Accurate Armour AA has been offering a rather large range of replacement track sets in their Trax Pax line. These are all resin strips and they do contain an increased level of detail. This is sort of strip & link without the links. The same type of tracks are found in most of Accurate Armour's line of full resin kits.

The method of assembly is unique to this type of tracks. The resin material is pliable and the runs can be carefully bent around the running gear of the tank. A hair dryer is then used to relax the links and make them conform to the running gear.

A set of these tracks retails for between \$15.00 and \$20.00 in the U.S.

AFV Club has one of the more unique and certainly one of the easiest link-to-link track systems. Their first set was the T-142 tracks which are suitable for the M48/M60 family of tanks. "Bigfoot" style links for the M1A2 soon followed. The material here is styrene and the system is simple but realistic.

All of the tracks so far have been the American block style, each of which uses a simple end connector. The end connectors are precisely spaced (exactly one block's distance) on the sprue and the blocks are simply cut off the sprue and slid into the end connectors. This greatly speeds construction.

The tracks do remain nominally workable after construction which means they can be realistically draped over the suspension.

The big drawback here is that all the types that have been produced so far have rubber blocks with steel end connectors. This means that they must be painted separately and this can be tedious.

Another minor drawback is that the types done so far are live tracks, so there is no sag in the run. Modelers will need to find a way to simulate some tension on the tracks for the most realistic effect.

On the plus side, these tracks are much more detailed than vinyl tracks and they do conform to the idlers and drive sprockets in a much more realistic manner.

Among the latest releases from AFV are two sets for the M5 and M3 Stuart tanks (also live block tracks). These do not use the same system as described above. Each of the blocks must be individually mated to its end connectors. We're hoping that Sherman tracks are close behind.

These sets are priced at around \$15.00 and a set of the T-142 tracks is included in the Vietnam version of the M88 recovery vehicle.

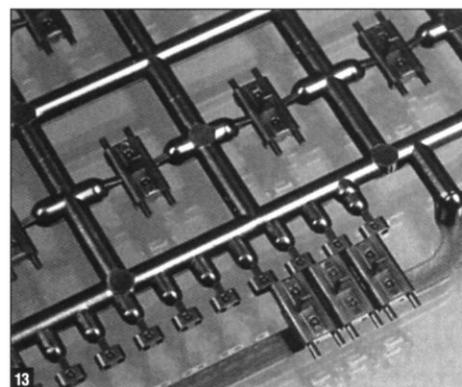
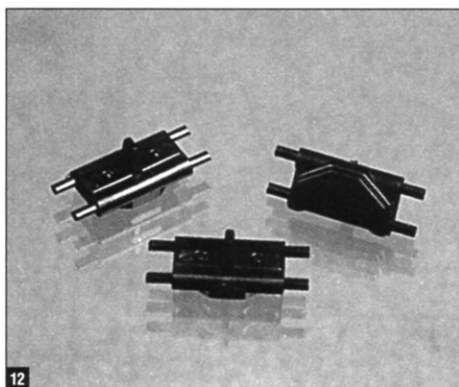
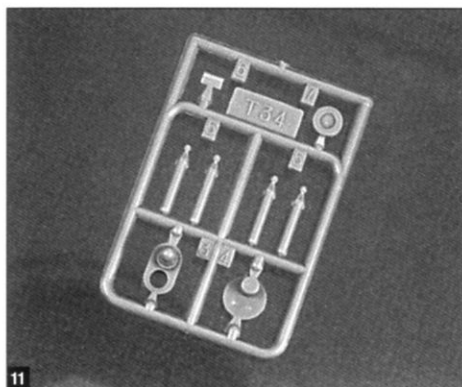
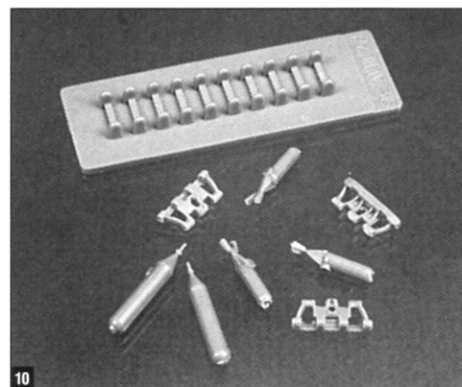
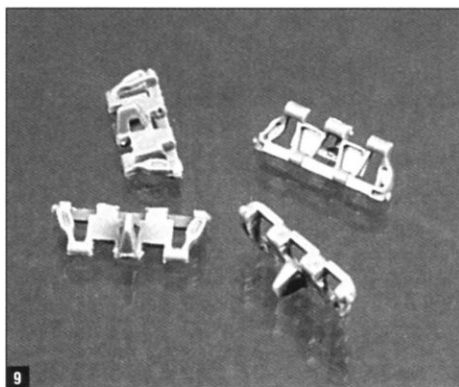
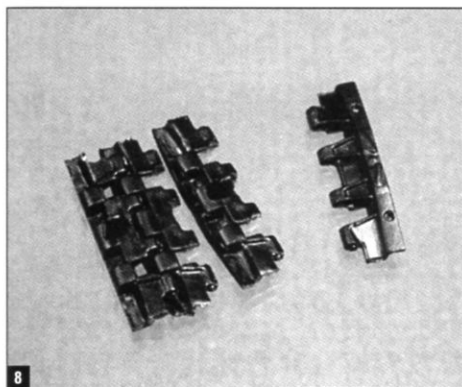
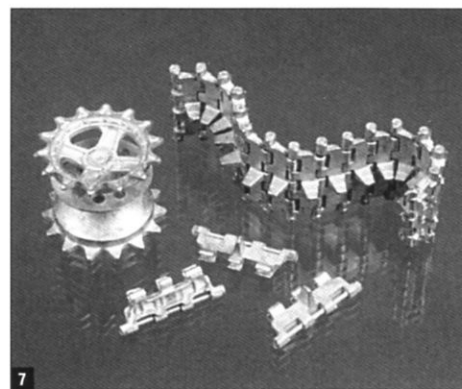
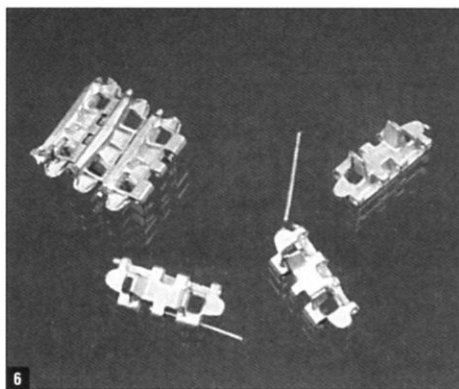
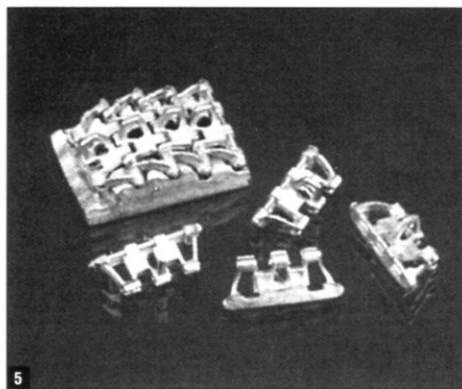
Cromwell Models offers a line of resin strip replacement track. These are known as the Trackpack line. These are similar to the resin tracks described above.

The Cromwell Trackpack sets retail for approximately \$15.00.

Dragon Models Ltd. As mentioned, Dragon was the real pioneer in adding the concept of link-to-link tracks to full armor kits. Every single armor release from DML has contained them.

All the various kits are different and each has its good and bad points. DML kits feature

1, 2. The AFV Club T-142 tracks. The top shot shows the way the blocks are presented on the sprue. Their positioning allows you to create an assembly like the one shown in shot number 2. 3. The is the newest set by AFV Club for the M5/M8 Stuart series of tanks. The end connectors must be added individually. 4. An example of the DML link-to-link tracks. In this case, the links are from their recent T-34 kit.



5. Friulmodellismo's initial track system. This is their 36cm set for the Panzer III/IV. Note the jig at upper left and the open horns on the links. 6. This is the newest system which utilizes pins for the links. Each link has an open shaft and the pins, which must be cut from the provided steel wire. 7. This is another earlier Friul set and it includes drive sprockets which match the tracks. This is the set for the T-72. 8. The new Elephant set from Jaguar

Link Model Workshop. The links are non-workable. 9. One of ModelKasten's original non-workable link sets. This is the 40cm set for the Panzer III/IV. 10. The workable version of the same track. The guide horns are separate parts. Compare them with those in the previous photo. 11. Just one example of the extra parts that are sometimes provided inside ModelKasten track sets. This is an idler modification set for the DML and Tamiya T-34's. 12. The first track set from Skybow, the T-136 tracks for the M108/M109. This system is similar to that offered by AFV Club and the sprue set-up is shown in photo number 13.

non-workable links. The most often mentioned negative point on DML links is that they don't easily fit together. This is true of the dry fit, but our experience is that a small amount of liquid glue will "lubricate" the link sufficiently to allow it to go together.

This tight fit is most likely an intentional design feature that helps keep the links together during assembly.

There are some limits to the amount of detail major manufacturers are willing to put into their kits and some of the links in DML kits are not as detailed as they could be. Case in point: some of the Panzer III/IV series do not have hollow center horns as they should.

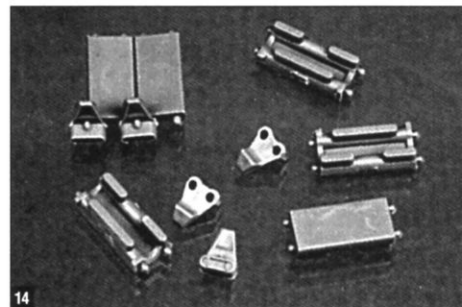
However, this is not always the case, as their releases of the Panzer III E and StuG A contain a very realistic 36cm track, complete with a hollow center horn. Some of the most recent releases in the 250 halftracks series are very finely detailed and can be made to remain semi-workable.

All DML armor kits contain link-to-link tracks at no additional charge, but certain sets are available separately (such as the Sherman) for approximately \$10.00.

ESCI This is an Italian firm that offers strip and link tracks in some of its armor kits. Most significant were their releases of the M60 and the T-55/Ti-67.

Friulmodellismo Say that ten times real fast. Friul is a small Italian company that entered the scene a few years ago with some highly impressive white metal casting. Impressive mostly due to their ability to cast open track horns on track links such as those used on the Panzer III/IV and the Panther. It's also impressive because it means that you don't have to hollow them out yourself!

They are (or were) two systems in the Friul line. Both are made from fairly pliable white metal and the first system used the method of a split shaft link. One of the two track shafts on each link is split



14. This is an example of the newest entrant to the link-to-link track scene, RHPS. So far they have offered only Sherman sets and this is the first in the line, the T49 Three Bar Cleat tracks. End connectors must be added separately.

open. The links are gently pressed together and the split shaft is closed by carefully pushing down on the soft white metal. A jig is provided to keep everything aligned during the process.

The second and most current system is based around more of that incredible casting ability. The new system uses metal pins just like the real thing. Actual shafts are cast into the links and coil of steel wire is provided to create the miniature pins. No jig is necessary and although it is a lot of work, this is one of the most realistic of all the track systems. It is also quite sturdy. The links will tolerate a fair degree of handling and rough treatment (try pulling them apart).

Although the casting quality is generally high, it's inevitable that some of the finer parts will be clogged with flash or excess metal. Cleaning this up can mean a considerable investment in time, especially when there are a lot of links. This does not occur with every set and given the "hand-made" nature of the product, it will vary from set to set. The most common difficulty is the need to open or clear the pin shafts on the newer sets—and of course, cutting the hundreds of pins needed to join the links.

Currently, Friul is converting all of its older tracks into this new system. Be careful though, as the stock numbers have remained the same.

Friul also offers a range of white metal drive sprockets that are fully compatible with their track sets. Many of the newer sets include the sprockets (and idlers) right in the bag.

All full track sets by Friulmodellismo currently retail for \$39.95. Sprocket and idler sets are priced from \$7.95. The new pinned system is in effect from stock number ATL-31 and the older numbers are being regularly updated.

Link Model Workshop These guys are a relatively new company out of Hong Kong. They are tooling non-workable links for inclusion in resin full kits. So far, On-Track Models (also of Hong Kong) and Jaguar Models have used these links in their kits.

The On-Track kits of the H39 Geschutzwagen and "Sturer Emil," and the Jaguar kit of the Sheridan all feature Link Model tracks and/or wheels.

The set for the H39 and a set for the Elephant are sold in the U.S. as Jaguar Link Model Workshop. The overall quality is quite good on these products. U.S. retail so far is \$17.98 per set.

ModelKasten MK is sort of the Granddaddy of all the link-to-link aftermarket companies. They were the first to offer this type of product as an add-on for your tank model.

The first types offered were non-workable links and before kits came with their own link-to-link, this was the way to go.

Unfortunately, once DML hit the scene with its kits, there was little reason to shell out the extra bucks for something you could essentially get for nothing.

The non-working MK track is often referred to by its product prefix as the "K" series. The K series includes one set that is a workable type. This is K-20, the set for the SdKfz. 7. It contains parts to allow the tracks to remain workable after assembly.

Not too long after the release of the late model Tiger I, MK began its "SK" series with a set specifically designed for that kit. This series is made up entirely of workable track sets.

The ModelKasten workable method is slightly different in that each link is held to the next with two small pins added to the outside of each link. The pins only reach in far enough to catch the

inside of the next link and as a result, they can be quite delicate.

The SK series also frequently provides separate parts for open track horns, such as those seen on the Panzer III/IV series. Although tedious, the finished effect is highly realistic. The plastic parts are also very finely molded and flash is virtually nonexistent.

One of the hallmarks of the SK line of tracks is that the sets frequently contain extra parts in the form of adjustable idler sets (in the Panzer IV sets), additional sprocket and idler parts, or other small items.

Some sets, such as the current sets for the H39 and R35, contain white metal drive sprockets. One set, for the ZSU-23, contains both white metal sprockets and injection molded roadwheels.

For about the last three years, MK has been gradually phasing out their older non-workable sets in favor of the workable ones. Currently only one or two sets have not been revised.

Like its closest competitor, Friulmodellismo, MK also offers a range of replacement sprockets. Currently the Panzer III and Hetzer are offered. There are also accessory items available in the line such as roadwheels, tool brackets, and rivet and wing nut castings—all in styrene.

Workable ModelKasten track sets are priced from \$29.95 to \$39.95. The accessory sets range anywhere from \$7.95 to \$13.95.

On-Track Model, Co. On-Track's line of full resin kits has, until recently, included resin link-to-link. Of all the individual link tracks, this is probably the toughest to work with. Each link must be glued one at a time and this can be a little like building a brick wall with nothing underneath. Slow setting epoxy helps, but tends to lack the tackiness to keep the links together. Not impossible, but tough.

Perhaps because of the above reasons, the last two releases have included injection molded tracks. These are actually quite nice non-workable links and are the work of a company called Link Model. For more on these dudes, see above.

Skybow is an offshoot of the original AFV Club team. They currently offer one set of link-to-link tracks. It is the T-136 track used on the M108/M109 family of vehicles. The system used is identical to the older AFV Club system. This set is very finely molded and quite accurate.

Beware of a much earlier set for the M113 under the Skybow label. These are somewhat crude non-workable tracks. They are rarely seen outside of Taiwan, but one never knows...

The T-136 set retails for \$14.95.

Snap Link This is a new and very rare system developed in Australia. The concept is that each of the links simply snap together and then remain fully workable. No pins, no nothing. The material here is resin and the real unfortunate part is that the gentleman who produces them has no immediate plans to export them.

Consider them to be a possible future player in the link-to-link scene.

RHPS The newest company to enter the fray, RHPS has so far based its line entirely around the Sherman. There is an intriguing variety of block types and duck bill end connectors are also to be offered as accessories to the main line.

Assembly is simple, if not a little on the tedious side. Each track block must be mated with its end connectors one at a time. The fit is good and they will stay in place long enough to be glued. The result is very pleasing though, and the level of detail is a vast

improvement over vinyl.

RHPS has promised that future sets will be workable and they appear to be committed to refining their line and responding to the needs of their customers. RHPS just might be the most exciting new comer to link-to-link since ModelKasten.

The RHPS Sherman sets retail for \$18.95.

Tamiya caused a ripple of excitement way back in 1988 when their brand new Tiger I kit was released with link-to-link tracks. The excitement was short lived, as this has been the only kit to be released with 1-to-1 so far (not including their mid-production Tiger, which included the same links in its box).

The Tiger I tracks are of the later type and the original kit also contained a handy straight edge to keep the links aligned during assembly. The fit is quite good and perhaps their only drawback is that the center guide horns are not hollow as they should be.

Although subsequent releases did not include link-to-link tracks in the box, Tamiya did release tracks as accessory items for their Tiger II and Panther kits. These were of the same type as the Tiger I, with excellent fit and finish and in the same dark metallic gray styrene. Oddly, the Tiger I sprues were never offered as stand alone sets. It is also interesting that the price on these sets is quite high.

One theory on why 1-to-1 never caught on with Tamiya is that the main body of Japanese modelers are younger and that such fiddly bits would be perceived as a hindrance, rather than as a plus. Of course, with Tamiya, this could all change overnight.

Look for a retail price on the Tamiya track sets of \$32.00.

Others

There are several other companies that offer link-to-link tracks. Many of the eastern European styrene manufacturers offer either separate or strip and link sets in their kits.

A company called Top Brass once offered an impressive line of Sherman links which featured styrene blocks and white metal end connectors. These are considered collector's items now and have been eclipsed by the more current sets from DML and RHPS.

The U.S. firm of MB models was a big proponent of white metal link-to-link. These were non-workable links and had the same inherent construction difficulties as resin link-to-link. MB's kit of the Russian 203 howitzer contains metal links, but due to the size of the runs and the design of the links, they are fairly easy to put together.

Sovereign's range of full armor kits features metal tracks in at least one kit so far; the Panzer III A. These are strip & link, although the strips are only five links long. See MMR #16 for a complete description of this kit.

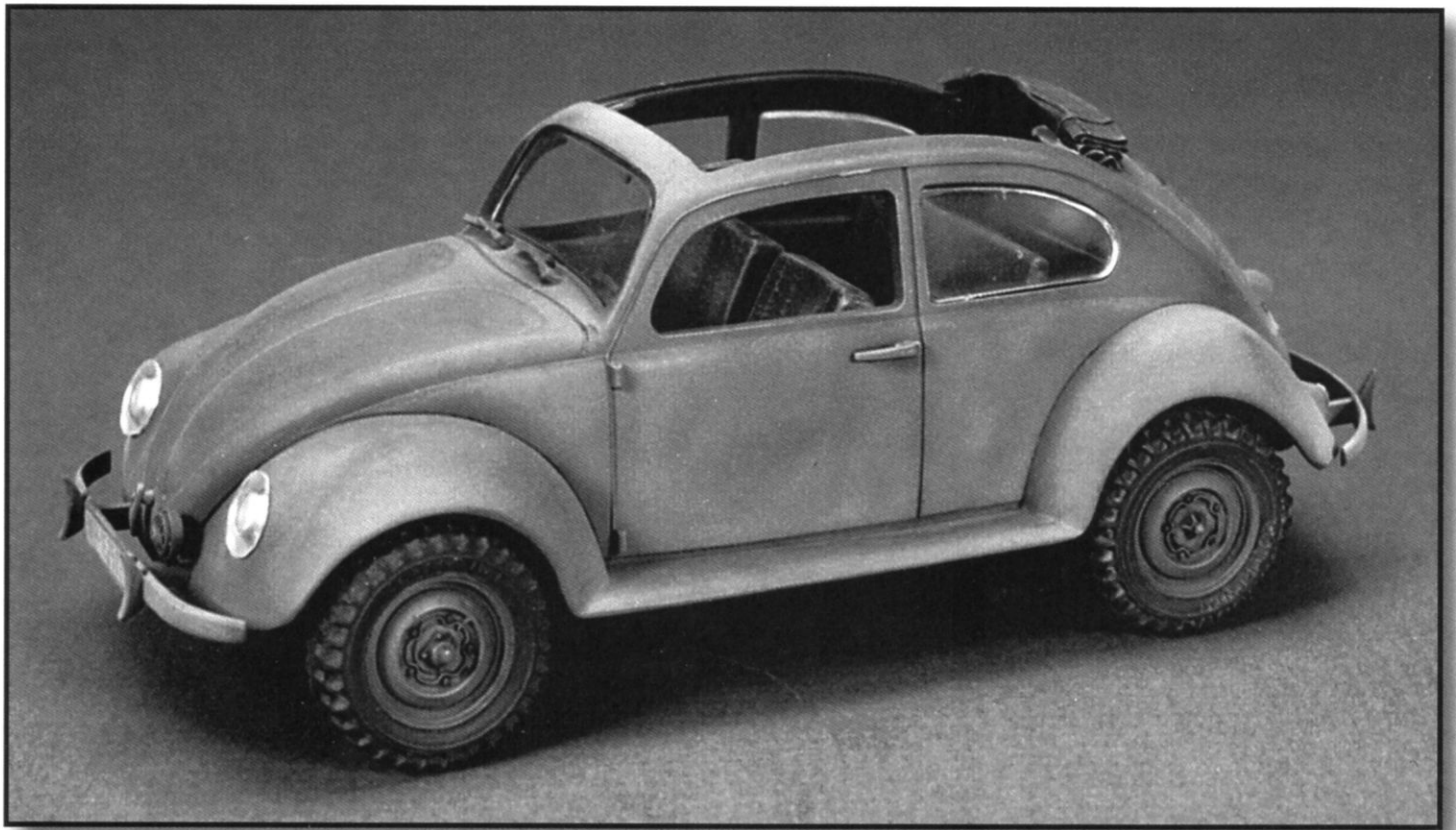
It strikes us that metal link-to-link could easily be made into a snap-link system. A simple raised pip which corresponds to a shallow dimple would seem to be an ideal solution (remember when your parents sat you down and gave you the pips and dimples talk?).

Link-to-link can also be found in the strangest places. There is an older Gunze Sangyo kit of the Somua S35 French tank. This is a re-box of the even older Heller kit, but it does contain a full set of white styrene non-workable tracks.

So there you have it, all the major players. Next time we get down to the nitty-gritty: puttin' it all together. 

Meet the Beetle

BEFORE THERE WAS FLOWER POWER, THERE WAS THE TYPE 87



It seems like the VW has always been with us as a model in some form. I remember the old Tamiya nasties with the metal axles with some fondness (although I can't remember why). I was pleased to hear that someone was finally going to do a kit of the wartime VW Beetle. The history of the Beetle and the other German Army VW's is intertwined. Of course, everyone knows the Beetle was originally developed by Dr. Porsche as an economical car that everyone could have—the People's Car. What is not as well-known is that the amphibious Schwimmwagen shared its chassis design with a four-wheel drive version of the Beetle. The development of an "off-road" Beetle goes back to the time that the Kübelwagen was designed. Versions of the Beetle were mated with the heavier chassis and drive train of the Kübel for off-road use and these were known as Type 82 E. The SS also had a version of their own, which was known as the Type 92 SS.

The four-wheel drive version of the Beetle was also manufactured in numbers and fielded by the German Army. It was known as the Type 87 and that brings us to the subject of our story today.

Meet the Beetles

CMK announced their Beetle some time ago and I was anxious to get my hands on one. A quick glance at the three sprues (one is the

glass) revealed that this is a pretty nice little model (and little the model is, measuring out only a smidgen under three inches). The basic layout of the sprues is good and the tooling is very competent, with the small vents behind the back window especially well rendered.

But (and you knew this was coming), what you get in the box is not a Type 87, but rather a Type 82 masquerading as one. The reason for this seems apparent. Three complete sets of wheels are supplied, as well as a few other parts not mentioned in the instructions. Apparently CMK was hoping to get at least three kits from the one. The upper body is a separate piece and the major distinguishing feature of the Type 87, the open roof, is present here.

The major problem comes in the fenders. CMK's

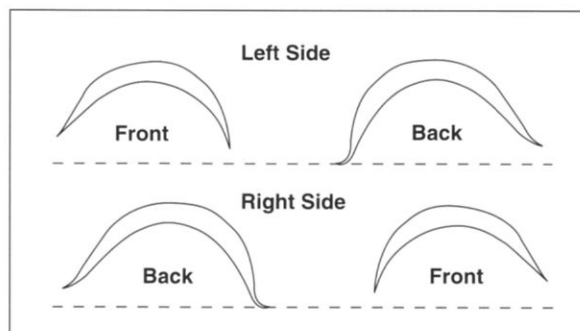
kit does not contain the wide and enlarged fenders created to accommodate the larger off road tires. I also felt the basic shape of the wheel-wells was incorrect, being a bit too high.

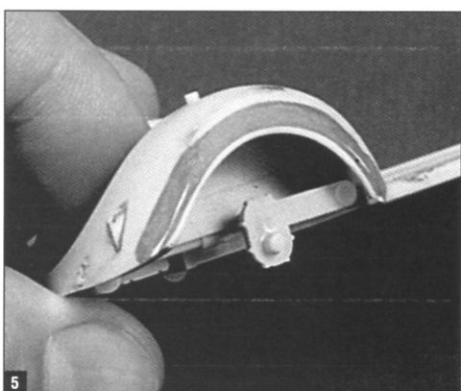
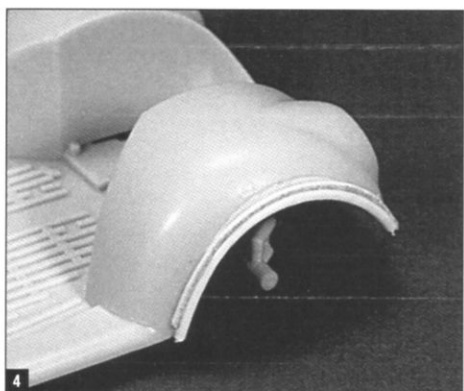
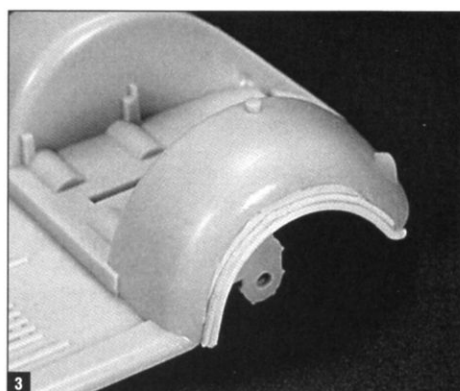
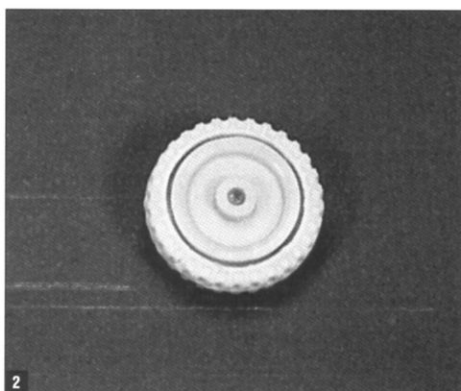
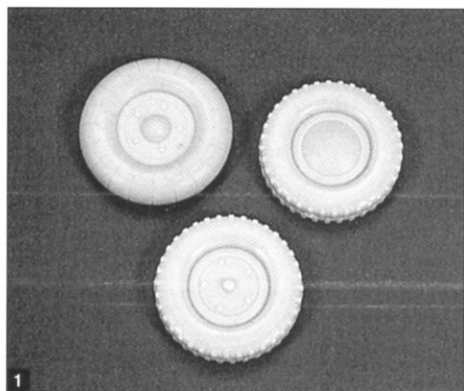
What to do? Well, I could just build the kit and shut up. But being a rather picky bastard, I decided to change a few things around.

Plugged in

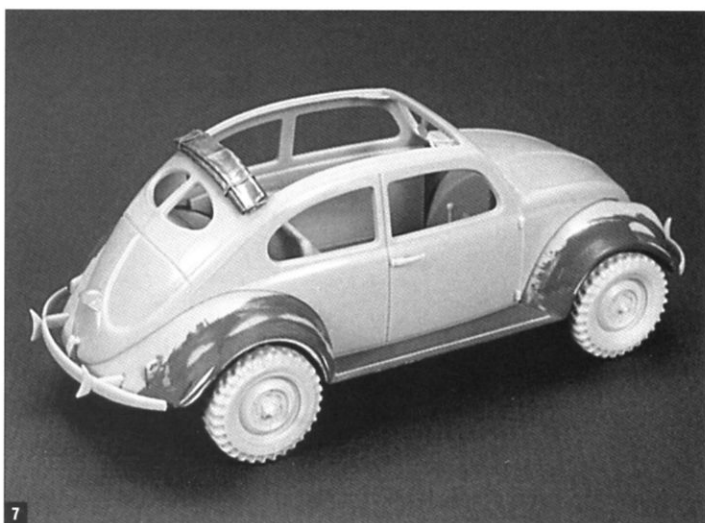
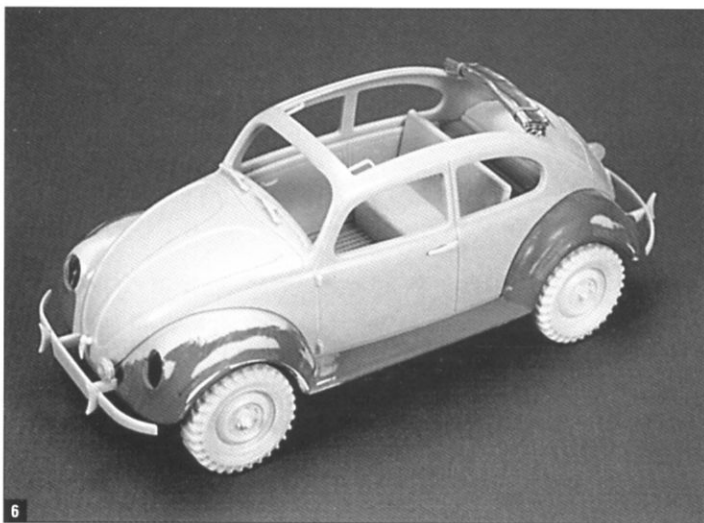
I went ahead and plugged the fender wells with thick styrene roughly cut to match the openings (I traced the kit fenders first). The new contour was more or less eyeballed from photos. When I was satisfied with the shape, I carefully glued lengths of .035 styrene rod around the edges of the fenders. This gave the fenders a nice finished edge and provided a basis for the flared feature seen on the real thing. The rod was also added to widen the running boards.

The other factor involved here was the addition of the Jaguar wide wheels originally meant for the Tamiya Schwimmwagen. All of my reference photos show the Type 87 with wide knobys. Of the three types of wheels provided in the kit, none of the hubs or tires matched the photos properly and the Jaguar wheels are well-done and inexpensive. The Jaguar wheels appear to be based on the Tamiya ones and the tires were properly hefty.





1. These are the three wheel choices provided in the kit. The wheel at the upper left is a desert sand tire. 2. The CMK hub mounted inside the Jaguar wheels. Putty was used to fill the gap. 3, 4. The rear and then front fenders wells plugged with styrene sheet and wrapped with .035 styrene rod. It's not mentioned in the text, but I also added small strips of styrene to the back of the rod to help make the transition. 5. This is the right rear fender well during the filling process. Here you can see the rod peeking out from the putty. It made a good guide during sanding and provided the proper contour for the fender lip. 6, 7. Two views of the finished kit prior to painting. The fenders have been primed once or twice to reveal any imperfections. You don't want to discover those after painting has begun. Also note the Jaguar knobbys and the home-made foil top.



I matched up the kit's hubs with the Jaguar ones and the fit was pretty close. A little putty was necessary to close the gap, but since it's the back side of the wheels, I wasn't too careful.

It is also possible to use either of the Tamiya kit's wheels if you're looking to do a Type 82.

Once the wheels were mounted, they were also used to check the contour of the fender openings.

Putty me up

Approximately 14,000 coats of red putty were added to the fenders to achieve the desired contours. Wet sanding with a very fine paper was used to keep everything looking smooth. The areas were also primed a couple of times to reveal any small imperfections.

Back to normal

The rest of the kit was built pretty much according to the instructions which indicate a peculiar arrangement for the interior. The instructions call for the installation of three single seats and a bench

in the rear. I'm not certain, but I believe that this is the configuration of the Type 92SS version. However, the missing parts are on the sprue, so I added the basic bench type seat to the rear as well as the cargo area underneath the rear window. For some reason, I have always called this area "the boot."

The fit of all the interior components was great.

The body panel floor was neatly detailed with the requisite wooden slats and the remaining interior parts where all well done. The front seats have a nice tooling to them, but the bench was rather bald. I textured it with some Gunze Sangyo Mr. Surfacer before installation.

It's necessary to paint the interior before adding the body, so I gave it an overall base of black, then sprayed it using Model Master Acryl Panzer Gray. The wooden slats were painted with Vallejo Wood. The seats and gauges were all drybrushed light gray.

Once this was finished the body was added and everything was sealed up tight.

The remaining exterior details were added and this included some very finely detailed parts, espe-

cially the bumper and the exterior door handles. Some of the finest were the very delicately molded windshield wipers and the rear view mirror.

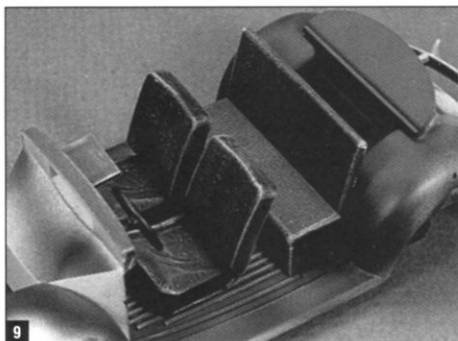
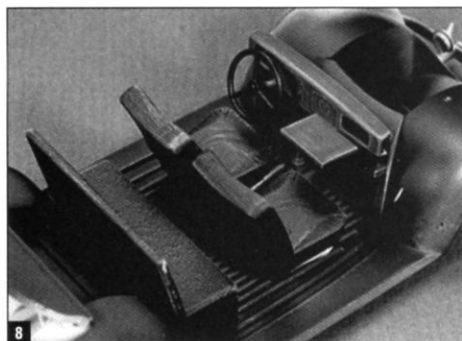
The rear taillight cover mysteriously disappeared into my carpet, so I formed a replacement from the ball mount from a DML Easy Eight (of all things).

I replaced the kit siren with one from the popular Tamiya Panzer IV tool set. This is a different pattern than those used on soft skins, but it was better detailed than the one in the kit.

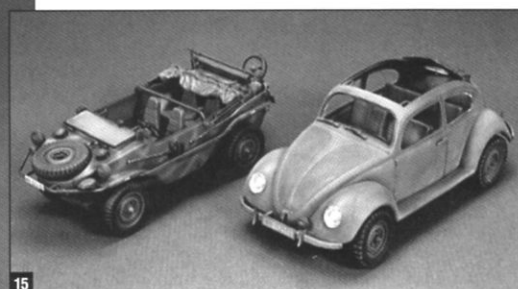
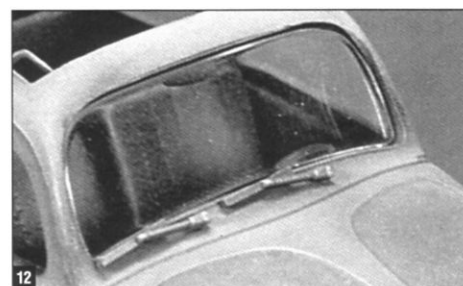
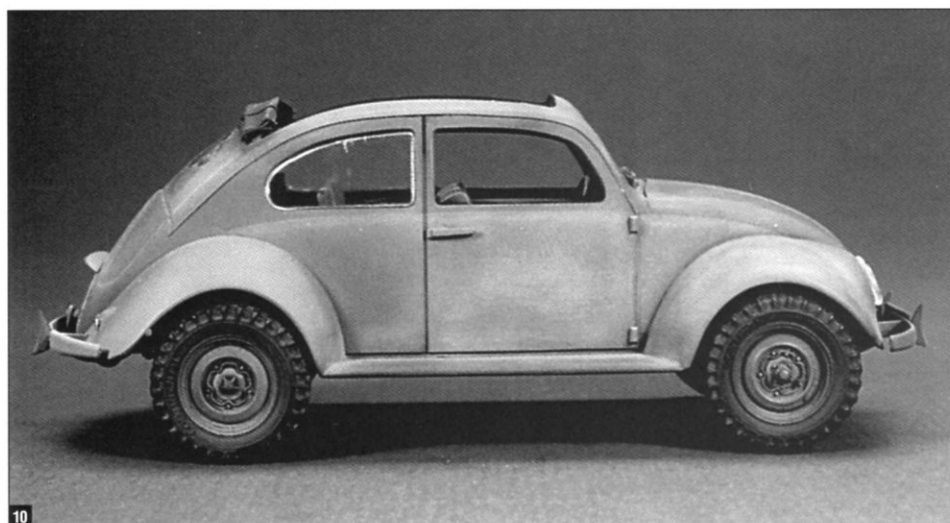
The Notek light was omitted on my model, as this is more of a Type 82 feature. I also replaced the chunky styrene folded top for the roof with one made from folded lead foil.

Paint, paint and more paint

The kit was finally painted with another overall black base coat and more of the Model Master Acryl Panzer Gray (by the way, all military Beetles were delivered to the Wehrmacht in flat black). The interior was masked off by stuffing cut paper and facial



8, 9. The completed interior. The parts are pretty well detailed. I was especially impressed with the front seats. The rear bench seat was rather smooth, so I textured it with Gunze Mr. Surfer. 10. Profile of the finished model. I was pleased with all the effort I put into the fenders. It looks fairly accurate when compared to the reference photos. The thick nature of the glass is evident here. 11. The Tamiya siren on the front bumper. 12. The windshield wipers were delicately molded and very "steal-able." 13, 14. These front and rear views also show the new shape of the fenders. In shot 14, you can see my new rear plate light cover. Prior to installation, the backs of the tail lights were painted Tamiya clear red, then silver. 15. The Beetle next to the Tamiya Schimmwagen.



tissue down into the cavity. A light dust color made from mixing the gray and a little tan was sprayed around the undercarriage and the fenders.

The Beetle was further weathered with a dark wash and drybrushed with lighter shades of gray.

The last parts added were the glass parts and I hadn't really taken a closer look until this point. It turns out that all the parts are quite thick and this is compounded somewhat by the fact that you can see down into the car from above.

A friend suggested the technique of carefully blackening the edges of the glass with a black indelible marker (this actually works quite well, hiding the edge reflection that reveals the thickness), but this was after the fact. This technique doesn't help the fact that the interior is visible, either.

I suppose that one of the aftermarket brass companies will come up with a solution for this. An interior flange and a stencil would probably do it. If I do another one, I could use the glass provided to make my own replacements. Getting them to fit perfectly would still be a trick.

I used white glue for the installation of all the glass parts. A word of warning: don't use a solvent based wash on parts installed with white glue. The wash will dissolve the glue.

I left off the door windows. I figured if it was a nice enough day to put the top down, it'd be nice enough to roll down the windows as well!

Well that's my tale. I liked the kit, but I didn't like the merging of all the variants into this one model. I assume that subsequent variants will be

released under a different box art.

I have included templates here, if you'd like to take a crack at the fenders. The templates were drawn as the model was being built, so consider them to be close approximations and check the fit as you go.

I still liked this model, it goes great with the other VWs in my collection and you simply can't beat it for the price. 

—Ken Dugan

MMiR RECCE

CMK Volkswagen Typ 87. Kit number T35013. Kit graciously provided by the U.S. importer of CMK, Squadron Mail Order. Suggested retail price \$12.98.

References

VW Beetle at War. Schiffer Military History Series VOL. 54, by Dr. Hans-Georg Mayer, Schiffer Publishing 1992. ISBN: 0 88740 400 6. This is one of the thin horizontal format books and it's the best for this model. It's got a dozen or so photos and a complete explanation of all the variants. A great deal at \$8.95.

Lauster your Wargel

AND YOU
THOUGHT
YOU'D SEEN
EVERYTHING

One of the weirder groups of vehicles developed by the Germans in WW2 was the Lauster Wargels. This was a series of heavy tractors built by the Lauster Co. of Germany. With the exception of one, all were developed as earth moving machines. That "one" was the LW 5 which is the subject of this article.

The LW 5 was originally designed as a heavy recovery tractor for the Tiger tanks. The two coupled towing units each contained a Maybach HL 108 engine which each could crank out a respectable 235hp. The rated recovery capacity was 53 tons. Large towing lugs were mounted on the rear of each unit and, in theory, additional units could be coupled together to increase the towing capacity.

A prototype was produced and the vehicle tested quite well. It's an interesting idea for a vehicle, especially considering how tough it was for even a Bergepanther to drag a disabled King Tiger. The U.S. Army and Air Force also had quite a bit of success with similar vehicles developed by the Le Tourneau company.

Lauster also tested the LW5 with an enormous trench digging apparatus (I guess they just couldn't resist the dirt), which could dig a six-foot slit trench in only a few minutes. At any rate, despite the success of the tests, the Germans decided not to proceed with the concept.

Fellmuth like to see them? Voilà! A model is born!

Congratulations, it's a kit

This is a very unique kit, in more ways than one. All the major parts are cleanly cast in resin, with the detail parts in white metal. Interesting thing: most of the resin parts have no overpours. Not only that, but they show no evidence of molding what so ever. Any trace of overpour has been milled off many of the parts and that is very greatly appreciated by this modeler. The only part that contained a significant over pour was the engine.

I gotta tell ya, this is real nice. I'll bet that most of the time spent on building a resin model is cleaning it up. I went right for my superglue and got busy.

Laustering a Wargel

The kit is not real complicated. The two towing modules are more or less identical, differing only around the back end. One also contains a connector lug, while the other is blank. Two humongous steel cleated wheels get mounted on each module.

Each module has a base piece and few elements get added inside of each. One module comes with an engine and the access doors

to the compartment can be left open to show it off.

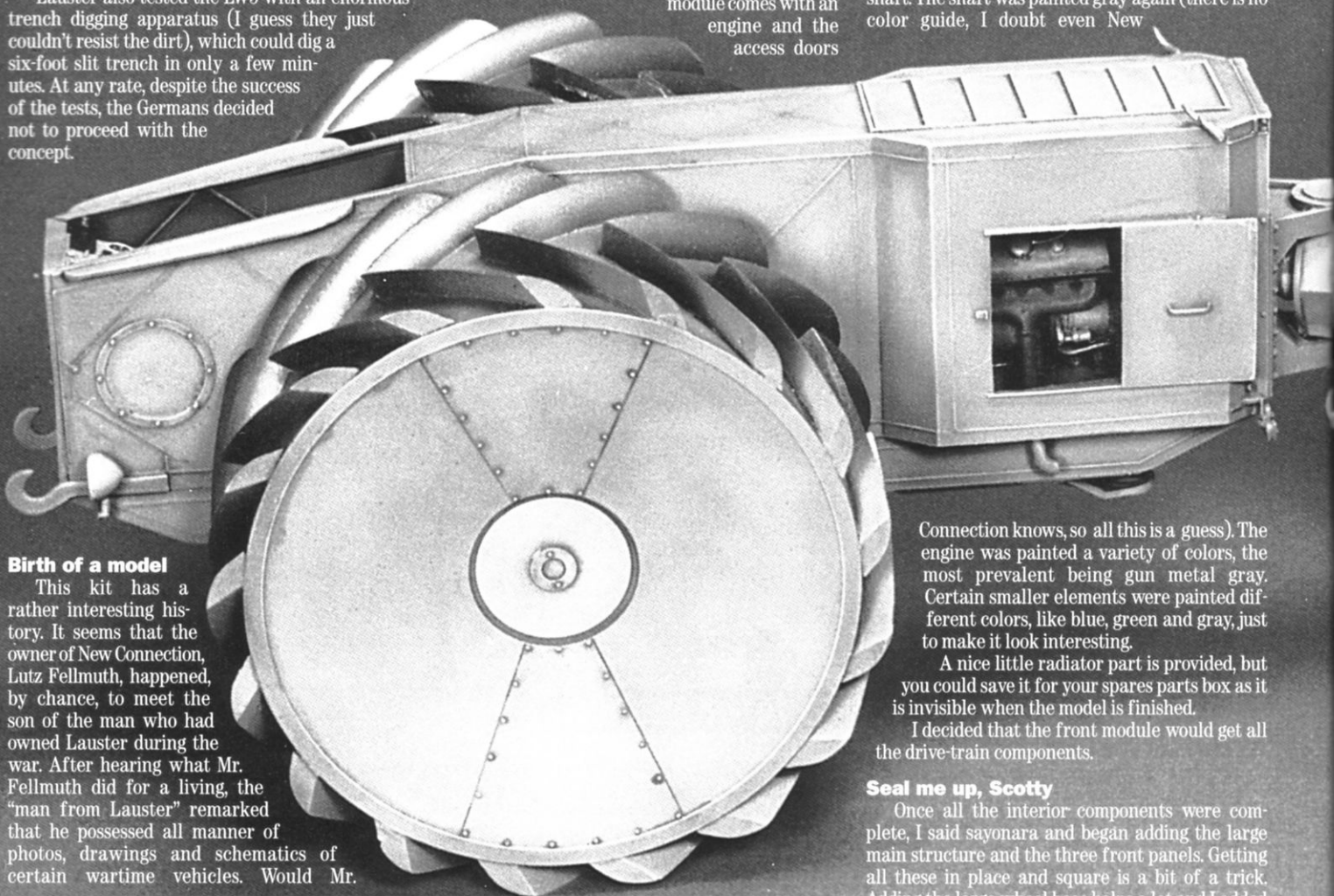
The driver's station is wide open, so there is a complete view inside. The moral: paint as you go.

There are a few metal parts to add to the transmission and the engine. A few levers must also be created from wire provided. The instructions indicate the bend points.

The transmission units are really gorgeous and the finished subassemblies are great looking. I was almost sorry to hide them in the kit (almost). The units were both painted gray and drybrushed with light gray.

I painted the interior of both modules that dark red-oxide color. It was mixed from Polly-Scale Panzer Red Brown and Red. Because I couldn't get at this area later to give it a wash, I first sprayed it black, then highlighted with the red-oxide mixture. This created some depth and gave the same effect as a wash. These parts were then drybrushed with tan. All the interior parts except the drive train got the red-oxide treatment.

Only one complete drive train is supplied and this includes both the engine and the main drive shaft. The shaft was painted gray again (there is no color guide, I doubt even New



Birth of a model

This kit has a rather interesting history. It seems that the owner of New Connection, Lutz Fellmuth, happened, by chance, to meet the son of the man who had owned Lauster during the war. After hearing what Mr. Fellmuth did for a living, the "man from Lauster" remarked that he possessed all manner of photos, drawings and schematics of certain wartime vehicles. Would Mr.

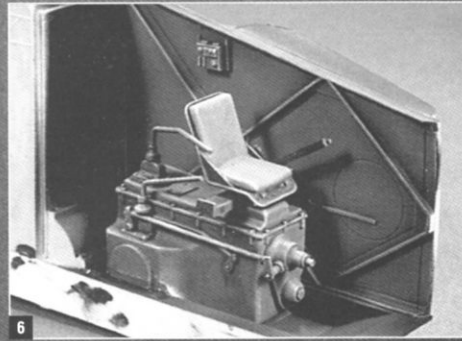
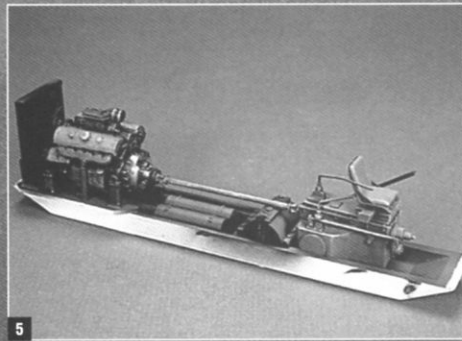
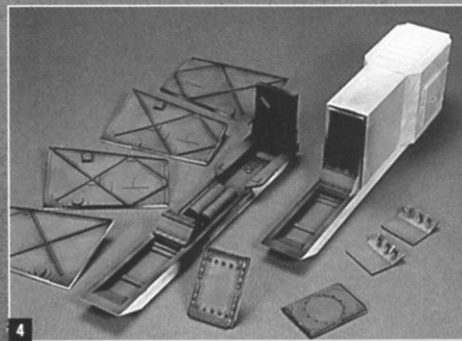
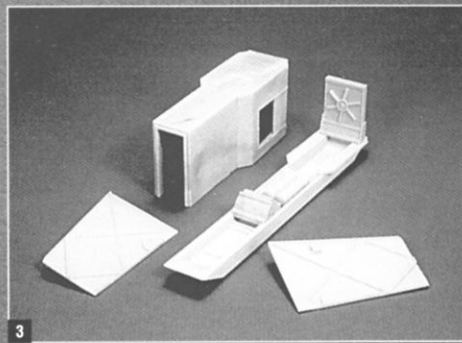
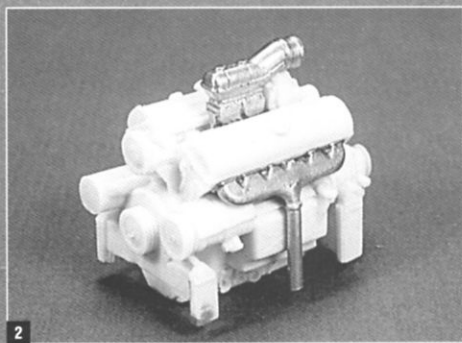
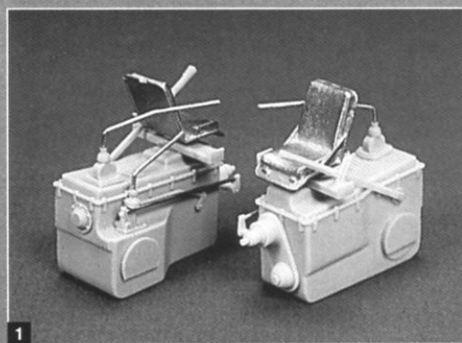
Connection knows, so all this is a guess). The engine was painted a variety of colors, the most prevalent being gun metal gray. Certain smaller elements were painted different colors, like blue, green and gray, just to make it look interesting.

A nice little radiator part is provided, but you could save it for your spares parts box as it is invisible when the model is finished.

I decided that the front module would get all the drive-train components.

Seal me up, Scotty

Once all the interior components were complete, I said sayonara and began adding the large main structure and the three front panels. Getting all these in place and square is a bit of a trick. Adding the large wheel base helps a lot and I added

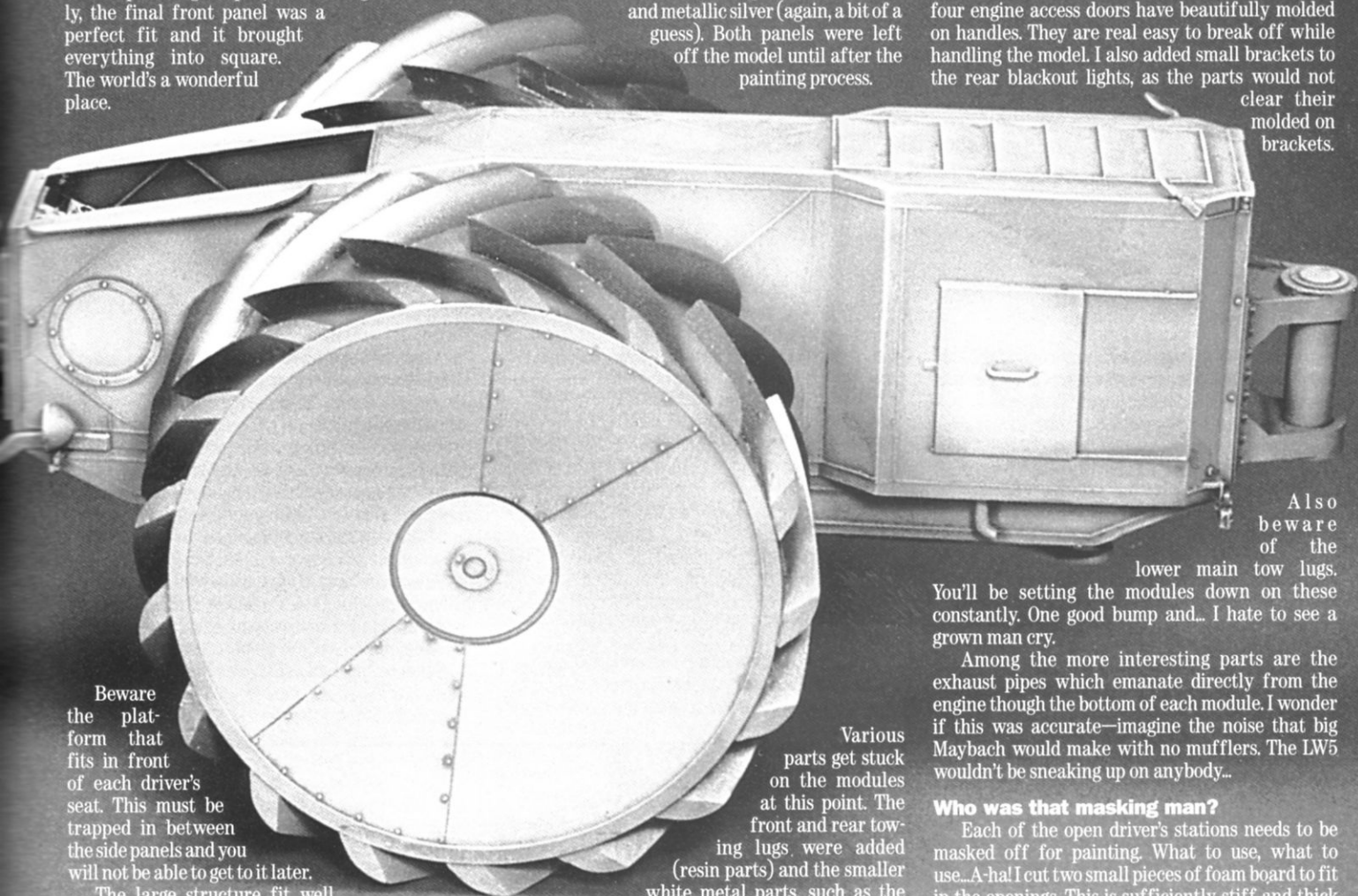


the two side panels first, squared them, then adding the front piece. A little coaxing and bending was in order to get everything in place. The side panels ended up looking warped, but amazingly, the final front panel was a perfect fit and it brought everything into square. The world's a wonderful place.

The instrument panels were painted gray, the gauges got a black base and the dials were picked out with white. Each also got a few drops of gloss. Certain knobs were picked with black and metallic silver (again, a bit of a guess). Both panels were left off the model until after the painting process.

quite snugly and this is a good thing later when setting up the model for display.

I pinned the headlights with brass wire because they looked a bit delicate. Speaking of delicate, all four engine access doors have beautifully molded on handles. They are real easy to break off while handling the model. I also added small brackets to the rear blackout lights, as the parts would not clear their molded on brackets.



Beware the platform that fits in front of each driver's seat. This must be trapped in between the side panels and you will not be able to get to it later.

The large structure fit well, but it did need a touch of putty at the very back. Not a big deal.

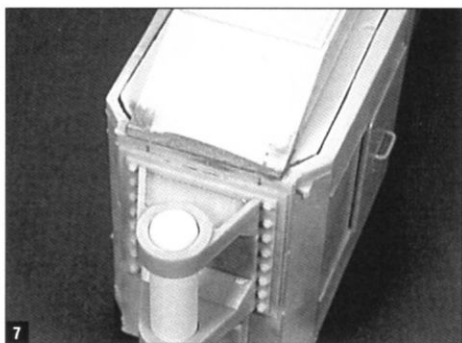
Various parts get stuck on the modules at this point. The front and rear towing lugs were added (resin parts) and the smaller white metal parts, such as the headlights, tow hooks and lifting hooks were also added. The male and female lug connectors fit

Also beware of the lower main tow lugs. You'll be setting the modules down on these constantly. One good bump and... I hate to see a grown man cry.

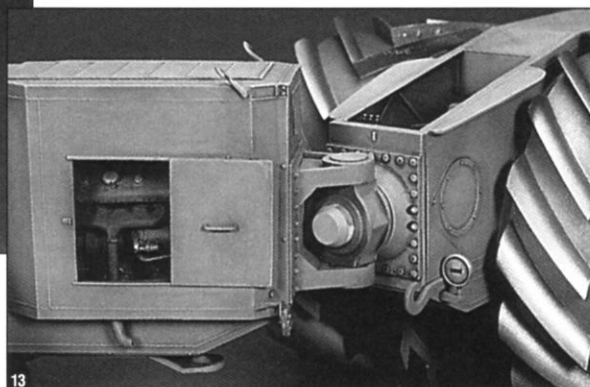
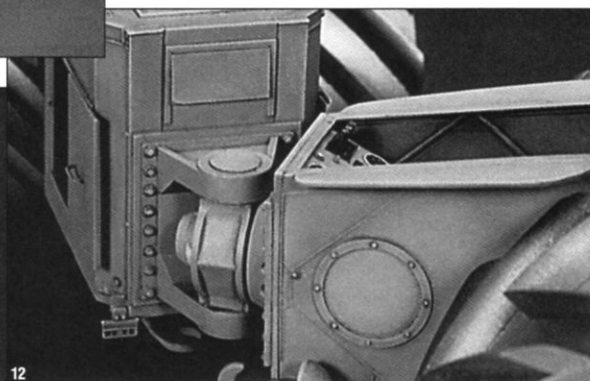
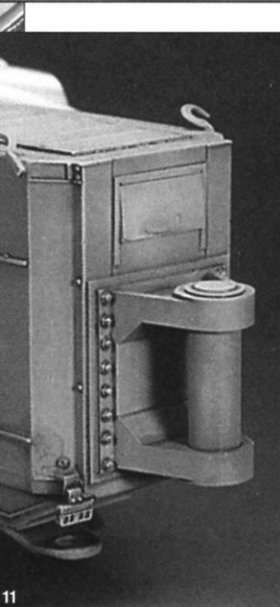
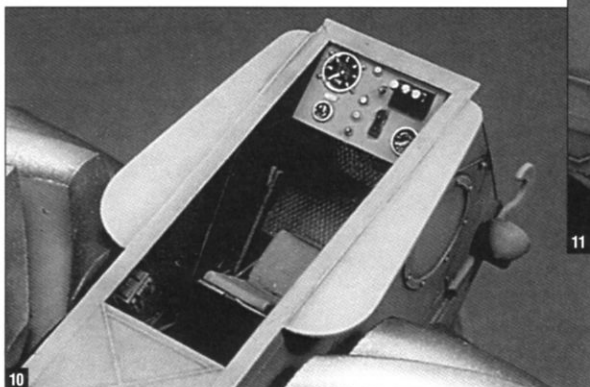
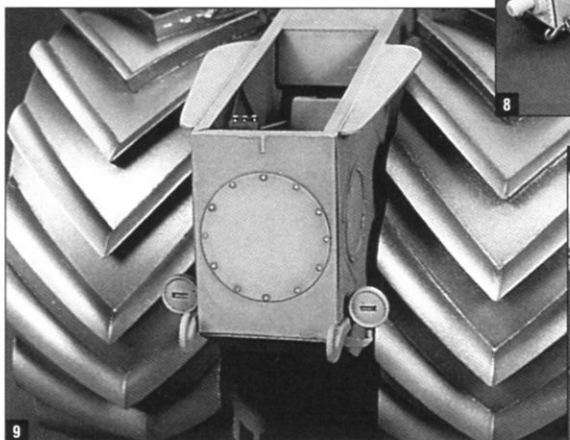
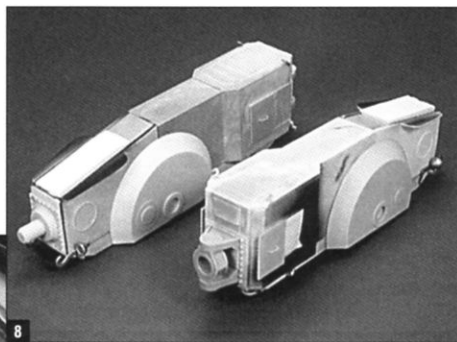
Among the more interesting parts are the exhaust pipes which emanate directly from the engine though the bottom of each module. I wonder if this was accurate—imagine the noise that big Maybach would make with no mufflers. The LW5 wouldn't be sneaking up on anybody...

Who was that masking man?

Each of the open driver's stations needs to be masked off for painting. What to use, what to use...A-ha! I cut two small pieces of foam board to fit in the openings. This is sufficiently stiff and thick to stay in place and sufficiently soft to gently



(1 through 6 are on the previous page) 1. The two transmission elements. Brass rod for the various levers is provided. 2. The resin engine and its white metal detail parts. Only one casting is provided. 3. The basic exterior pieces of each module. 4. Here, all the pieces for both units have been painted and weathered. 5. The completed drive train of the front module after painting. 6. A close-up of the painted transmission and driver's compartment. 7. A small amount of putty was necessary to close a gap on the bottom of each module. 8. This shows the model masked and ready to be painted. 9. The finished front end. Connectors could be installed on either end of each unit. 10. One of the completed driver's stations. 11. The rear connector. In theory, additional units could be coupled together for more pulling power. 12. Front view of the active coupling. The male portion of the coupling is a tight fit, so tight that the paint came off! 13. Looking forward at the rear unit. The engine is visible here, as is the super nice rivet detail on the coupling base.



conform to the opening. Cardboard would probably also work. The open engine bay was masked with two small pieces of typing paper.

Before painting commenced, I pinned the large resin wheels with pieces of brass tubing. I also drilled out the hubs to receive the pins. This helped in handling the wheels for painting and later in completing the model. The pins were left long until after painting.

The modules were painted overall Polly-Scale dark armor yellow and some highlights were created using the same color mixed with a little white.

The wheels were first painted black around their treads, then this area was lightly painted with Polly-Scale Metallic Pewter to represent worn metal. The inside and outside of each wheel was then painted with the dark yellow color.

There is a back panel in each driver's compartment that must be re-masked and painted in a second session. This was a little difficult, but I felt it was easier then trying to mask it all at once.

I used your basic dark oil wash to finish up the painting and weathering. I use W&N Burnt Sienna and Black suspended in Model Master enamel airbrush thinner (weird, huh?).

There are a number of bolts and rivets on the LW5 and these were carefully picked out with a darker

version of the wash. Drybrushing finished it up.

Lauster Wargeling off into the sunset

Final assembly was accomplished by adding the wheels. I trimmed the pins down and installed the wheels, making sure that the large chevron-shaped cleats faced down. The wheels really make this model and it is a little hard to envision what it will look like until this point.

Both sets of wheels were added before joining the two modules. It'll take a little twisting to mate the two, but the tight fit will help keep them together, as the modules have the tendency to tilt backwards by themselves.

I didn't glue the main connecting lug and this will help to position the model (or reposition, as the case may be).

The model was great fun to work on. The lack of overpours was an unexpected pleasure and their absence was a huge time savings. The model is striking when complete and although it was not an "in service vehicle" the extensive testing of the vehicle still opens up a few possibilities for its display.

Of course, if you are into the whole Wehrmacht fantasy thing, suitably insane individuals could add extra towing modules and do a E-100 recovery diorama!

About the only drawback to the model is its rather high price. However, more of this price than usual should be considered labor, due to the careful clean-up of many of the parts.

Some resin junkies still gotta have it! 

—Pat Stansell

MMiR RECCE

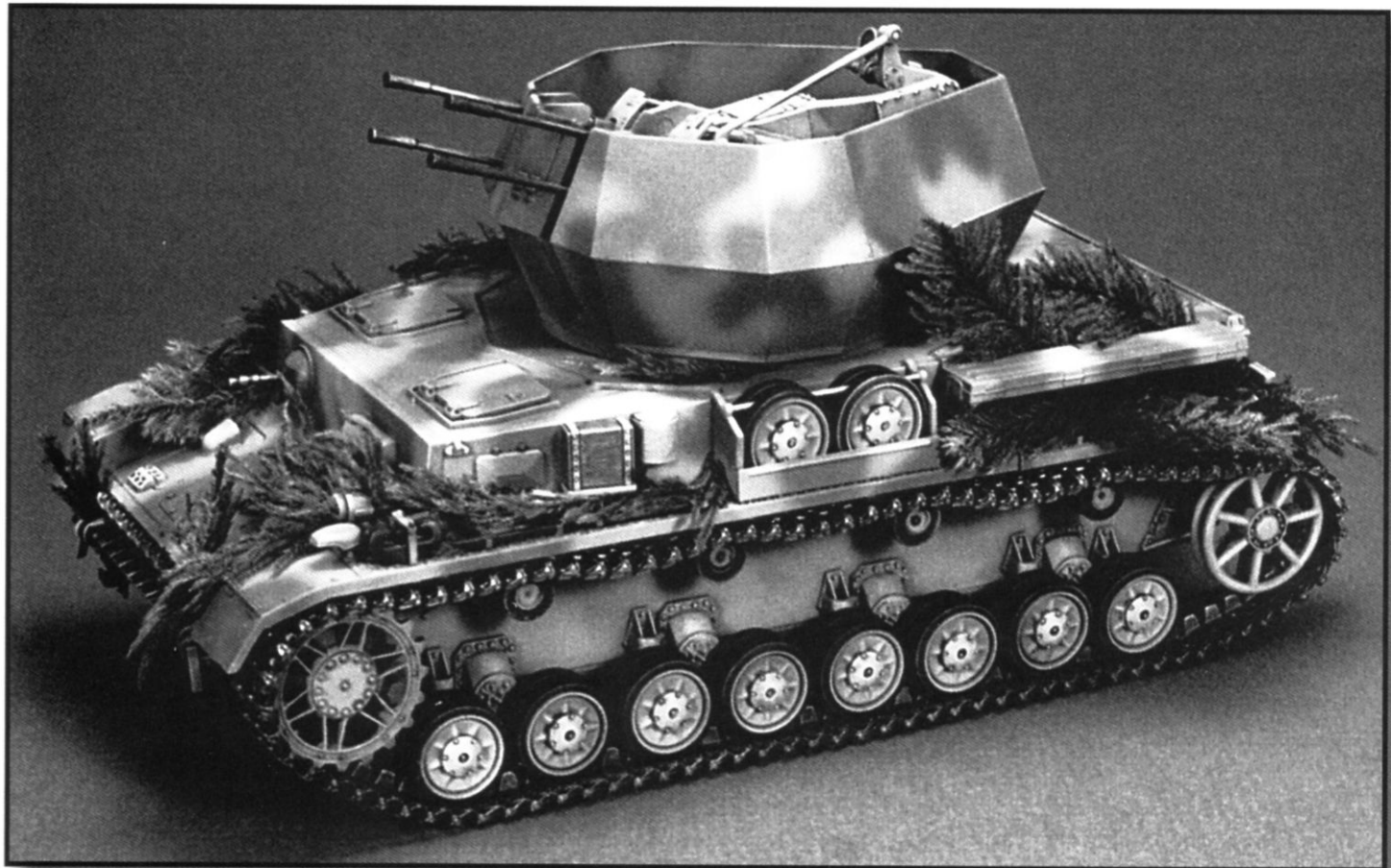
New Connections "Lauster Wargel" LW 5. Kit number NC 3557. Suggested retail price \$109.95.

References

Die Rad-Und Vollketten-Zugmaschinen: Des Deutschen Heeres 1871-1945, by Walter J. Spielberger, Motorbuch Verlag, 1989. ISBN: 3 87943 528 6. A German text "Speilberger" book, it contains a surprising number of photos of such a rare vehicle. A bit on the expensive side itself, the book also contains information on dozens of other German vehicles.

A Whirlwind Romance

Well, almost—it's the newish Wirbelwind AA Tank from Tamiya



Anti-aircraft defense was not a new concept to the Germans by 1944. Even before the war they had developed several excellent weapons for air defense. After the start of hostilities these weapons were deployed in a variety of ways and on a variety of platforms.

The idea, of course, is to keep them where they are needed most and by 1944, the Germans needed them to be with their Panzer divisions, which were getting a good ol' ass-wippin' from the Allied fly-boys.

The answer was a whole series of vehicles based on the chassis of the Panzer IV. The first was the so-called Möbelwagen (German for moving van), which mounted the devastating 2cm Flak 38 within a large hinged and armored superstructure. The big slab-sided look of the vehicle inspired its nick-name.

The 2cm Flak 38 was true bad-ass. It was originally developed for the German Navy, but it was so effective that it began being issued to ground units in 1940. The four-barreled weapon had a crew of three and could throw 800 0.33 kg rounds up in the air in one minute and every minute thereafter. Ouch.

The most common form of the gun was as a trailer mounted weapon and they were often placed around German airfields in the west. Allied flyers had a healthy respect for the gun and any strafing mission where they would be encountered in numbers was practically considered suicide. These guns

also extracted a heavy toll on incoming airplanes in the opening phases of the D-Day air drops.

In the Möbelwagen, the gun was rather simply installed just as it was normally deployed in the towed role. The complete gun and shield was installed on a modified Panzer IV chassis.

In order to offer the crew more protection, a further development of the concept was considered. This vehicle would employ a more fully enclosed traversing turret.

The resulting vehicle was the Wirbelwind (you know—whirl wind). The turret was six-sided and it included enough protection for the crew to operate the weapon with armor reaching above their heads. The turret was still open topped to allow for the maximum elevation of the gun. The gun's shield was removed, but was otherwise identical to the towed version.

Old meets new and guess who?

German armor freaks, no doubt recall the veritable flood of Panzer IV kits that Tamiya released in the 1970's. It started rather innocently and when it was over, we had the Panzer IV H, the D, the Sturmgeschütz IV, the Möbelwagen and the Wirbelwind.

These same individuals may also remember a similar thrill when Tamiya released an all new kit of the Panzer IV J, then followed it up with an all new Panzer IV H. All we had to do was wait and the

variants would flood in, right? Well, wait we did. Three years after the H model, the new Tamiya Wirbelwind has arrived. Sort of.

Sort of because what you get in the box is the cracking good Panzer IV H and the turret and gun from the original 1975 Wirbelwind kit.

I thought the contrast would not be a big factor, but... Let's look at the kit.

My buddy J

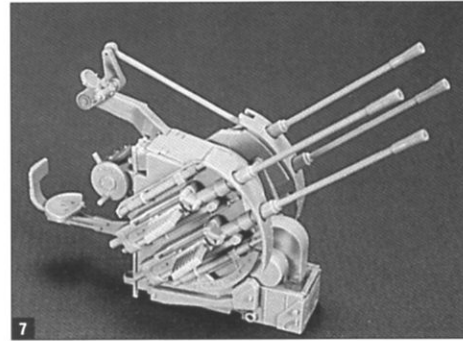
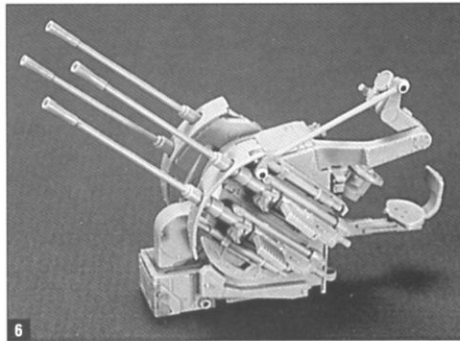
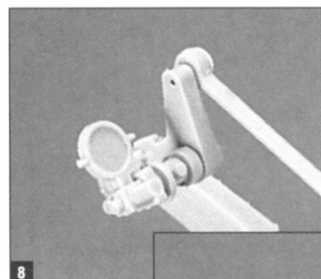
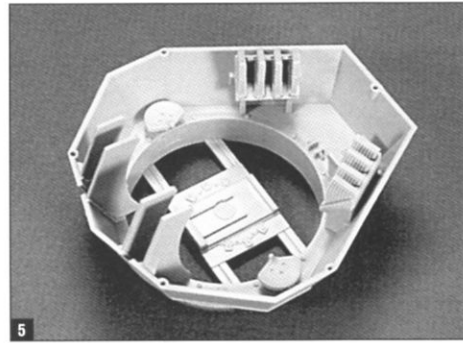
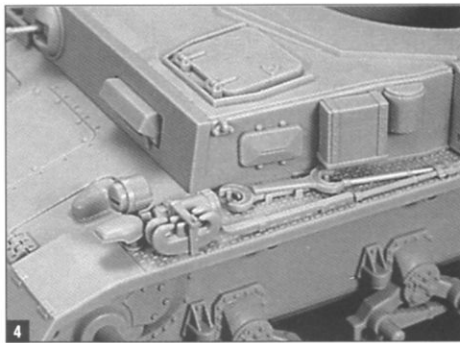
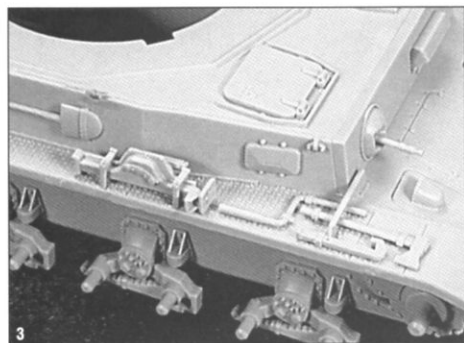
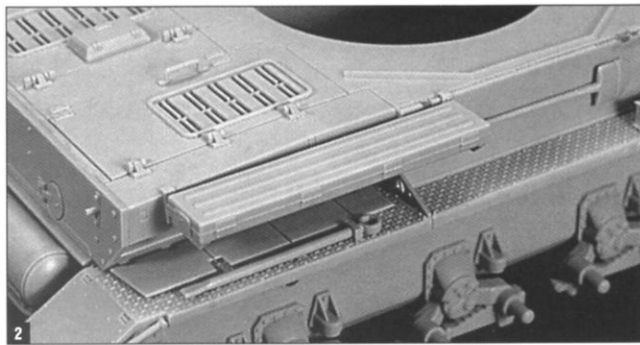
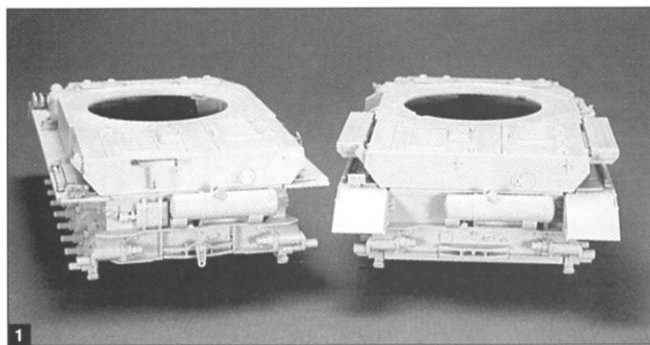
This is the complete Tamiya Panzer IV J kit and it has only a single tooling difference, which is the accommodation for the spare barrel containers on the rear hull. These boxes and their supports make up all but one of the new parts in the kit.

The primary differences between the J and the H are around the back plate and Tamiya has rendered these well. The instructions indicate the presence of Zimmerit throughout, but I opted to leave this off my vehicle.

This was and still is an awesome model. I decided to groove on a whole out-of-the-box experience. Moving through the construction is a real pleasure and I enjoyed all the features of this state-of-the-art kit.

The bottom hull is fully detailed and the suspension is just breathtaking. The final drives contain a subtle cast texture and this is also present on the suspension mounts as well. Great stuff!

There's more fun up top with the now legendary Panzer IV tools and more of that cast texture found



on the front hatches.

Curiously, a couple of the items added to the upper hull do not have locating points. Their position is fully illustrated in the instructions, however.

You must also open two holes for installation of the Bosch light on the front left fender. The barrel containers get added last. The hull goes together quite quickly with the most time consuming part of construction being the wheels. I left these and the other suspension components off for painting.

That was fun wasn't it?

The horror... the horror

Well, so much for the fun. The fascinating part about this kit is that everything above the waist; turret, gun, etc. is all vintage 1975 stuff. If you want to see just how far Tamiya has come in the last 24 years, just build yourself a Wirbelwind. The contrast is stunning.

Not only do parts not fit, but the mold-alignment on virtually all the gun parts is terrible. The barrels aren't even close to being round and many of the main gun base components bore only a passing resemblance to a usable part.

It's weird, as this type of thing is not even being done today by the Eastern European manufacturers. Now, I don't mean to bash on the Tamiya dudes. They simply don't do stuff like this anymore (thank God).

1. A comparison with the H and the J hulls. The J hull is what's inside the Wirbelwind box and it's on the right. 2. One of two new parts for the lower hull, the spare barrel containers. 3, 4. The pretty tool groups as they come on the kit. 5. The lower turret. This is the 1975 kit with the exception of one small part. 6, 7. Left and right views of the finished gun. Although it was not a super easy build, it still ends up looking O.K. 8. Close-up of the stock gun sight. The center was actually hollow and it contained a cross-hair glass. 9. The barrel ends were hollowed out with a sharp X-acto blade. This works especially well here, due to their conical shape.

However, it's the contrast between all that great new tooling and the old gun that strikes me as odd. Would it have been that much work to create a new gun? At the risk of coming off as a whiny baby, I'll leave it at that.

I will state that the gun does turn out fairly well in the end. Many of the botched parts are hidden and in spite of the poor fit, the level of detail on the individual parts is quite high.

Tamiya provides workable parts for the gun and this requires melting the contact points on the linkages. I opted to pin these areas with Grandt Line rivets, which, although a bit inaccurate, accomplished the same effect without the chance of lighting my shop on fire.

The ends of the barrels were drilled out using the famous X-Acto twirl method. This works especially well here due to the conical shape of the flash suppressers.

Additional help is out there for the gun in the form of an Eduard sheet for those of you with a thing for photo-etch.

Turret time

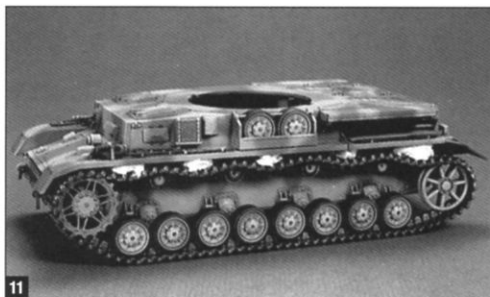
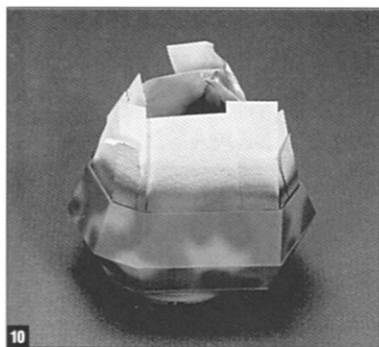
The turret is also from the original 1975 kit. It is

very simple, so it doesn't suffer much from the old molding techniques. There is one new part in the turret, which I think is part G13. This is a small box located behind the gunner.

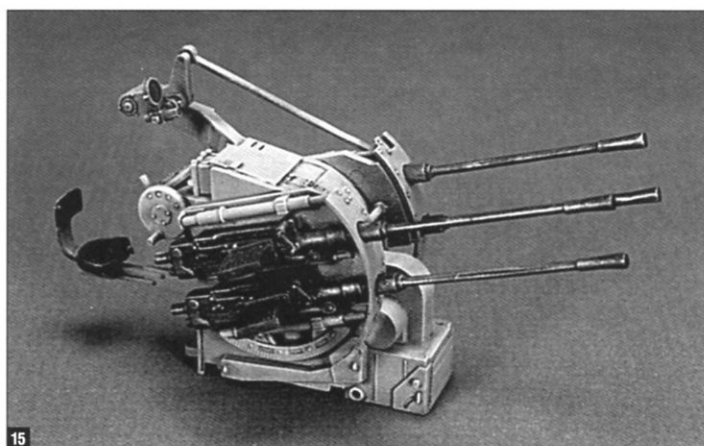
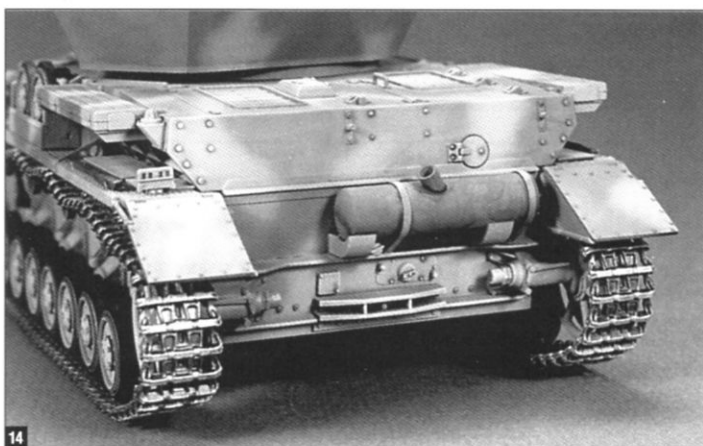
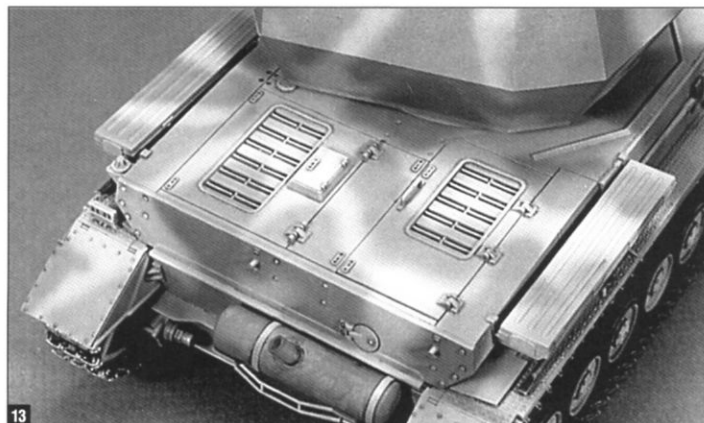
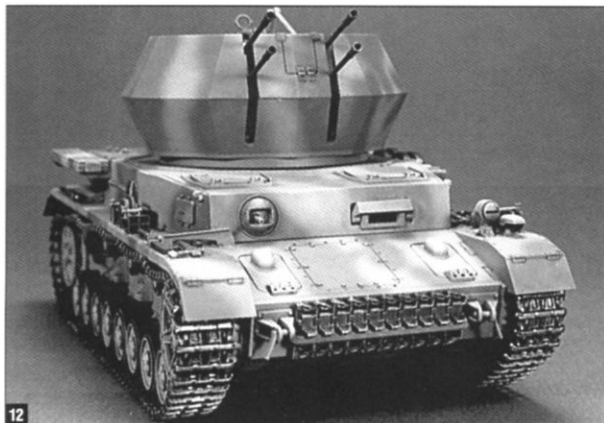
And speaking of the gunner, the original quad crew is still in the box. These are the guys in the winter suits and they have appeared in the SdKfz. 7 kit with the quad, as well as the stand-alone model. If you wish to use them on your model, they will all have to be painted and installed before you button up the turret.

It is also necessary to paint and weather the turret before closing it up. I used the same technique I used on the LW5, spraying dark yellow over black to substitute the depth effect created by a wash. I used Tamiya Dark Yellow acrylic, XF-60. The various ammo clips were painted black and drybrushed with light gray, while the rest of the interior was drybrushed with a buff color.

It's possible to leave the gun out of the finished turret, so this was painted with the rest of the kit. I painted it Dark Yellow overall with black barrels, which were then drybrushed with gun metal.



10. The interior of the turret was masked with Post-It notes. This works best with flat surfaces like this. 11. The tracks were a loose fit, so small bits of paper towel were used to hold them down for gluing. A small Teflon applicator was used to apply the superglue from behind. 12. The front. The model is a good representation of the real vehicle. The spare tracks are regular styrene. 13. The highly detailed engine deck. Both the spare barrel containers are visible here. 14. The completed back end. 15. I left the gun assembly loose in the turret, so it could be lifted out for stuff like this. The finished gun was acceptable, but Eduard and Jordi Rubio could find a home here.



And the rest...

After the turret was sealed up, the remainder of the tank was painted with the XF-60 and then camouflaged with Tamiya Red Brown (XF-64) and Dark Green (XF-61) using the kit's box top as a guide.

The wheels were mounted on a scrap piece of balsa wood using double stick tape and painted black. I used a template to paint the centers with the Dark Yellow. I didn't apply camo below the fenders.

I used the back side of several Post-It type notes to mask off the interior of the turret. I cut each to size depending on the length of the turret panel. This works well on these straight, flat surfaces.

The entire tank (and the gun) got the basic "oil wash" and it was then drybrushed with lighter shades of all three camouflage colors.

The tracks provided are the basic Tamiya vinyl type supplied in their newer H and J kits. They are pretty good for vinyl. I painted mine with a mixture of black, red and gun metal, then drybrushed with silver.

They are a pretty loose fit, so after installing them on the tank I stuffed small pieces of paper towel in between the return rollers and in front of the idler wheels. Using a Teflon tip, I added small amounts of superglue from behind to the top of the rollers and

idlers. After a few minutes, the paper can be removed and a reasonably saggy track is the result.

Reference photos of the Wirbelwind show heavy use of local foliage, so as a finishing touch, I placed Hudson & Allen pine boughs at various points around the vehicle.

I'll get over it

Believe it or not, I liked this kit. I guess I was a little put out by the older parts and some of this is due to the fact that I built the hull first. Doing the turret

and gun first might make this a more pleasurable experience. Recently finding out that Tamiya's new Möbelwagen is a completely new kit above the waist made me a bit sore as well.

One consolation might be the subsequent release of an Ostwind. This would utilize the new 3.7cm gun from the Möbelwagen with an all new turret design (it was a little bigger and a different shape). I'll keep my fingers crossed.

—Pat Stansell

MMIR RECCE

German Flakpanzer IV Wirbelwind. Kit number 35233. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail \$32.00

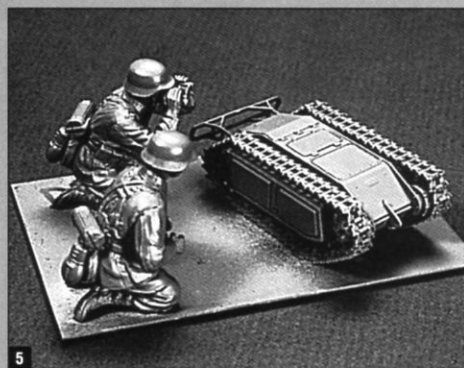
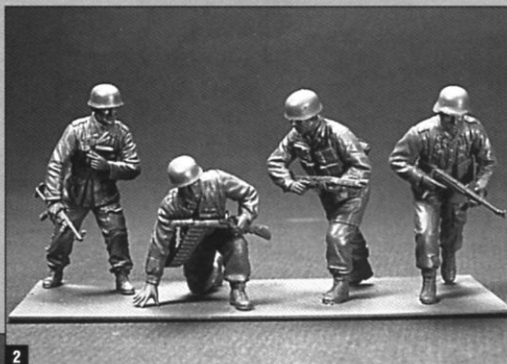
References

Panzer IV & Its Variants, by Walter J. Spielberger, Schiffer Publishing, 1993. ISBN: 0 88740 515 0. This is the English language version of the Motor Buch Verlag classic. The book contains several large photos of all the variants (some of all three vehicles together) and drawings, too.

German Medium Flak in Combat, by Werner Müller, Schiffer Military History Series VOL. 43, Schiffer Publishing 1991. ISBN: 0 88740 351 4. From the smaller booklet series, this publication contains photos of all the flak guns, including the quad and a few pictures of the Panzer IV vehicles (some are the same as the above book). Bargain priced, though, at nine dollars.

Mini-Men

A PEEK AT WHAT'S NEW ON THE FIGURE FRONT



What better way to launch our new, expanded format than to bring you one of the biggest Mini-Men ever? We've got mini-men, mini-dogs, mini-bases, even some mini-ordnance—let's take a look.

C.D. Yoshi

Sure, you saw this guy up front in the last issue. Here he is again. Yoshi's figure output is slower than most, but they're always worth the wait. **CDS615, German Officer Stalingrad (1)**, is a kneeling Wehrmacht lieutenant hollerin' like mad at something or somebody. He sports the Iron Cross, Close Combat Clasp, and other decorations. That right hand is molded right on the grip of the MP40.

Dragon

The folks in Hong Kong keep cranking out innovative figure sets at unbelievable prices. Even if you've totally given up injection figures for resin, you'll find plenty of great parts and accessories in every box. Plus, there's usually some special piece of gear you weren't expecting—sort of like Cracker Jacks.

6094, Gran Sasso Raid (Otto Skorzeny & Fallschirmjäger) (2), features a fine likeness of Otto himself, plus three of his compatriots during the infamous mission to rescue Mussolini. Skorzeny and a junior NCO wear the tan tropical uniform with bloused boots, while two other paratroopers spring into action wearing the standard jump smock—both of them feature separate bandoleers for their weapons.

6095, 'Totenkopf Division' (Budapest 1945) (3), is an interesting choice with a fine variety of uniforms depicted. These are winterized infantrymen of the 3rd SS Panzer Division, and as depicted they would be in Hungary in January 1945. (We kicked the living crap out of them later, and when they surrendered to Uncle Sam in May, they had less than 1,000 men and six tanks—down from an original strength of 19,000. We gave 'em to the Russians.) More great gear, and everybody's dressed differently, so you can spread them to other winter scenes. Check out that leaning guy on the far right! What a pose!

6098, German Feldgendarmerie with Dogs (4), has two polizei types out for a stroll with Fido and Sparky. (That's Sparky on the right.) If you've never been to Germany, you may not know that true German Shepherds are considerably smaller than their North American counterparts, and they are correctly depicted here. Nice attention to detail. The man in the rubberized overcoat has a complete set of legs, around which you glue three separate sections to form the tail of the coat. (It gaps properly in the back.) Add your own leashes from foil or paper. This is a truly outstanding set and sure to be one of Dragon's all-time best sellers.

6103, German Engineers with Goliath Demolition Vehicle (5), gives us a cool treat we've been missing since ESCI disappeared. There were 2,650 of these babies produced between

April 1942 and January 1944. It was officially designated Sd.Kfz.302 Leichte Ladungsträger, and it packed a 60Kg Sprengladung. ("Watch it, Hank! That's a load of Sprengladung headin' this way!") The machine is very well designed, and includes some teeny-weenie individual links and sections for the tracks. One kneeling dude peers through the binos, and the other operates the Goliath. You'll need to twist three strands of wire together and run 'em from the little beast to the box in Fritz's lap (two wires for steering, one for detonating). BUT WAIT—THERE'S MORE! Take everything in this photo and double it, because you get two (count 'em—TWO) complete Goliaths and two pairs of engineers! What a deal!

6131 features Armored Reconnaissance, Wiking Division (Hungary 1945) (6). These guys were right in there with 'Totenkopf' in Hungary. They're depicted in and around the Sd.Kfz. 2501/Neu, but can go anywhere. It's a good 'un, as you get two AFV types and two infantry types, all SS. The guy with the helmet holds a map, and check out the turning pose on the other grunt. Includes the always-handly three-set photo-etched head-phone fret.

Harper Castings

Fairly new to the big distribution scene, Harper has been doing mostly Japanese figures for the last couple of years (and some fine figures they are). Here's their first foray into Germans.

G-1, German Tank Hero with Propaganda Officer (7), is an outstanding idea; a wounded tanker with bandages and sling being interviewed. Check out that little notebook, and the very natural posing of two guys having a conversation. This had to be a very common scene throughout WWII.

G-2, German Combat Artist (8), is an absolute gem; after all, somebody had to paint all those paintings, right? Here he is, complete with palette, easel, and your choice of four pre-printed paintings (two landscapes and two tanks). The palette is cast separately from the hand, and the thumb is already on the palette. You could also have him painting a portrait of some general staff type.

Hornet

Roger Saunders strikes again with more head sets this time around, and helps fill in some real gaps in the figure market.

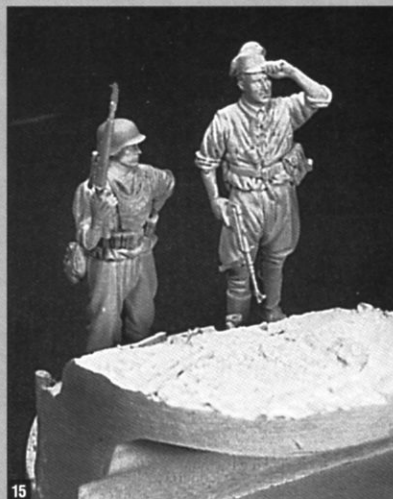
HBH6, 5 heads wearing British WW1 steel helmet (also used by USA) (9), gives us five dough-boy types with various expressions. You could also get away with British WWII, and even some very early US WWII Pacific guys.

Then slam bam, here's all the beret-wearing heads you'll ever need to fill your scenes for more recent decades. Remember, berets are worn in a lot of different manners for different nations and forces. All include five heads. Ready? **HQH 01, 5 heads wearing berets pulled right, cocked front (USA, Royal Marines) (10); HQH 02, 5 heads**

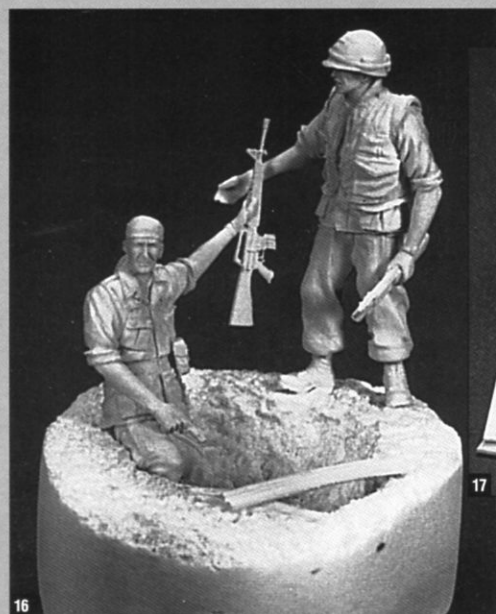




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wearing berets pulled right, tight shape (British 1970s on) (11); HQH 03, 5 heads wearing berets pulled left (modern French, Spanish) (12); Careful! Number 03 includes a pair of unit crests cast onto the base of each head for trimming off later on! And HQH 04, 5 heads wearing berets pulled right, worn casually (British 1940s, 50s) (13). Nothing beats a great head.

Jaguar

Jaguar does it again with more super cool figures to make you drool.

63086, Setting the Trap, East Prussia 1945 (14), has a kneeling SS fella in camo smock rigging a Panzerfaust to a fence for remote detonation. Pretty neat, huh? Comes with his own Jag-O-Rama base plus more fence than you see here, or you can put him in a scene with a bunch of other guys all preparing mines and weapons. A casual figure, but on the verge of a close encounter.

63088, German Snipers Operation Barbarossa (15), has a pair of serious-looking SS types checking out their handiwork. These are some very well done figures. Both men have hands molded to their weapons, and the guy with the peaked cap has his hand molded to the brim as well. Most excellent. The Jag-O-Rama base is a two-parter, featuring a wooden retaining wall, grenades, clips, spent shells, and more. Gotta have it.

63089, The Tunnel Rat, 'Nam 68 (16), is another complete scene. While all the other Jaguar entries this month are sculpted by Brian Stewart, here we have the hand of Seo Jeong Ho. If you don't know what a tunnel rat was, check out the film *Platoon* and you'll see why these guys look so grim. You'll rarely see jungle fatigues sculpted as properly as these, and the flak vest is dead on. We'll wager there are more than a few Vietnam vets who would love to have this one. The base is another good one and could also be incorporated into a larger jungle scene.

63090, The Last Defenders, H.J., Berlin 1945 (17), is a chilling reminder of the totality of the Nazi regime. A kneeling grunt points out the finer aspects of a Panzerfaust to a Hitler Jugend boy. The youngster features a Hitler Youth dagger and insignia and the set also includes one open and one closed Panzerfaust shipping crate. Read the last two chapters of *Citizen Soldiers* and you'll get a whole new perspective on how much the H.J. were feared by the GIs. Brainwashed and heavily armed is a deadly combination.

63091, Berlin Sewer, the Final Chapter, Berlin 1945 (18), is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the number of sewer sets produced by Jaguar and Warriors and a fine set to boot. A very pissed off Ivan pulls a battered Volkssturm out of the famous sewer. The sculpting and details on both figures is superb. A separate manhole is included. To position the German properly, drill out your wooden base, or incorporate the Jag-O-Rama into a larger street. We've elevated ours with Legos to give you

the whole picture. Another exquisite offering from Jaguar.

Warriors

The friendly folks at Warriors have been hopping lately, with more top-notch figures to keep your paintbrushes happy.

35241, US Infantry Officer Running (19), has a hard-chargin' officer dashing into harm's way. He's got a mesh cover on his helmet and a full complement of gear. Or he could just be trying to gain an extra yard.

35242, SS Pair/Winter Dress (20), has two heavily garbed Germans up to no good. They both wear the hooded winter smock and brandish Mauser rifles. One holds his weapon at the ready while the other prepares to let go with a stick grenade. A dynamic duo if ever there was one. If you need more, or like one more than the other, they're also available separately; standing guy is 35251 and kneeling guy is 35259.

35243, SS Grenadier/Kharkov Parka (21), is a casual German with hands in pockets. The jacket is well bulged and the pose is just right. Ready for your next Eastern Front diorama.

35246, US Tank Crew Vietnam (22), is a full figure and two partials. The full figure sports a flak vest, and he and the driver wear the Combat Vehicle Crewman's helmet with mike. The half figure wears the steel pot with camo cover. The poses are just right, ready to pop into your latest 'Nam AFV.

35247, SS Grenadier/Winter (23), is another fine winterized German hefting a Panzerfaust and a case of stick grenades. The sculpting is excellent and the shoulders clearly reflect the weight of his weaponry. Well done.

35248, SS Tanker Walking with Pistol (24), is another one of this month's Pissed Off Guys. His left sleeve is torn, his arm is bandaged and he's out taking a stroll with his Luger looking for the guy who just wasted his tank. The turtleneck sweater is perfectly rendered. Note the left epaulette hanging off his shoulder—nice touch.

35249, British SAS Crew 1942 (25), is a pair of Brits to attach to your SAS Jeep. They're lean and mean, wearing shorts, beards and the kafir head-dress. One holds a cup of java while the other gestures with his thumb. This is a great idea and fills a gaping void in figures for this critical aspect of WWII.

35252, Waffen SS Casualties (26), is another in the long-running surge of wounded Germans on the market—and one of the best yet. There is excellent balance here in both figures and the obvious weight of the wounded man is evident in the lower figure. Both wear camouflage smocks, helmets with covers and ankle boots, which gives them more of a same-unit accent. Kudos for this one, guys.

35253, Waffen SS Pair (27), has two SS men wearing their Zeltbahn tent quarters as camouflage outer garments—a very common practice. The



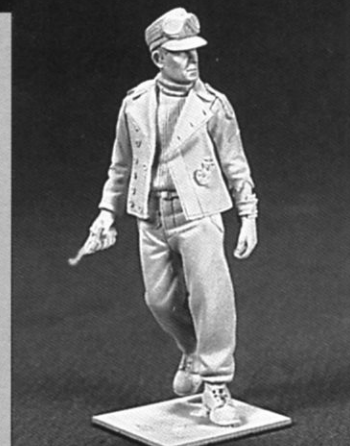
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kneeling officer in schirmmütze wears binoculars and map case and holds his Luger at the ready. The helmeted, standing figure holds an MP44 assault rifle and is giving the "shhhh" gesture with his finger to his mouth. Another truly outstanding pair of figures.

35254, Waffen SS Tanker/Battle of the Bulge (28), is an instant classic. He wears the officer's peaked schirmmütze, tanker jacket, toque (scarf) and padded reversible winter trousers held up with suspenders. He ponders a pack of smokes—either GI issue, or an unfamiliar brand—and has a well rendered stance. A flare pistol is included to attach to his waistband.

35256, The Road to Stalingrad (29), is the first vignette from Warriors since *Blowing the Bridge*. It bears the fingerprint Mrosko "wedgie" in that a partial hunk of T-34 is included. The thrown tracks are cleverly cast to the base. Tank elements include the hull portion, separate roadwheels, turret, gun, driver's hatch, MG and assorted hooks. Also included are three complete Wehrmacht troops which fit nicely into place. It's evident that they are in a temporary position, waiting for more troops to move up and join them. A real stunner and very well executed.

35257, US Paratrooper/Normandy (30), has a trooper from the 82nd Airborne humping his way inland. He bears a Thompson submachine gun and a .45 pistol, plus lightweight combat load. Nice tear in the left knee. This man is moving with a purpose and another fine effort.

Wolf

Here's a whole slew of new figgies from Wolf, which fall under the Hornet umbrella in England.

WAW 26, German Tankman Relaxing, Seated, WW2 (31), is a bare-chested tanker catchin' some rays, or cooling off. His shirt is still tucked into his trousers and hangs from his waistband. Very creative. He wears the camouflage field cap and ID tag and is very naturally posed.

WAW 27, German Tankman Sprawled, Reading, WW2 (32), is a one-piece casting with plenty to keep you busy. He's laying on his jacket and pistol belt and you'll find a cap, book and folded eyeglasses as well. Ready to plop down next to your latest panzer and a perfect companion for WAW 26.

WRP 06, British Tank Officer WW2 (33), is another fine figure and very multi-functional. You could swap that Webley pistol for a map, or leave him as is for a more in-combat scene. He sports that innovative low-slung canvas holster and has a pair of goggles pushed over his beret.

WRP 07, WW2 German Tankman in Reed Green Uniform (34), is quite unusual and therefore all the more desirable. You just can't find that many figures holding an umbrella. It's wonderfully cast in resin and very well posed. The reed green uniform is distinguishable by the large pockets on the chest and thigh. This dude is based on a famous

photo of a Jagdpanther unit retreating through France in the rain.

WSH 20, Werewolf, Berlin, 1945 (35), depicts one of the Berlin defenders with overcoat and Panzerfaust. (Seems like Panzerfaust madness this month!) There's a stick grenade tucked into his belt and helmet slung on his left hip. He doesn't look too happy, either. Includes a small wall section.

WSH 22, German Tankman in Overalls Playing Accordion WW2 (36), is a good 'un. He's really letting go and the accordion is well done. There's a soft cap tucked into his belt and the figure includes songbook atop a wooden crate. He's wearing green trousers and the mouse gray shirt and is a one-piece casting except for the right arm, which attaches at shoulder and wrist.

WSH 23, German WW2 Soldier in Greatcoat and Snowsmock (37), provides a sentry-type soldier peering skyward, shielding his eyes. He is properly thick considering the layers of clothing he's wearing and is identifiable as SS only by his belt buckle. There's a Kar 98k slung over his shoulder and he includes a small wall section.

Yanks

The Yanksters check in this round with three of their best sets to date.

9718, U.S. GIs Eating in Ponchos (WWII/Korea) (38) is, we believe, the first figure set to depict the GI in the oft-despised poncho. They keep out the rain, but they're smelly and hot and have been a staple of US issue for decades. These guys look justifiably PO'd to be having chow in the rain. There's one standing, one sitting and one walking and the set includes separate hands and mess tins. Yanks has made huge bounds in their casting and these guys are first-rate. Great idea, Dave.

Like the poncho guys, we can't recall any Merrill's Marauders in scale. Here they are—**9733, U.S. GIs Wading (Merrill's Marauders) (39)**. Two Pacific GIs cross a stream in the Burma/Pacific theater. Both wear the lightweight M43 uniform. The guy with the .30 cal has a multi-purpose, over-the-head ammo bag, rather like saddlebags to keep your ammo dry. He also sports a very nice shotgun. Guy #2 has a .30 cal carbine and a machete. The set includes a chunk of riverbank with a hunk o' stump.

9745, GIs in Overcoat by Fire (40), is perhaps the best thing Yanks has done yet. Three of our guys in overcoats huddle over a brazier and the poses are just perfect. You get a chill just looking at them. They all wear the rubberized overshoes and cartridge belts and they also reflect the major changes Yanks has made in their casting. Think Bastogne. Think Hurtgen Forest. Think anywhere in the Bulge. Then go buy these guys—guaranteed to please.

All figures reviewed in the Mini-Men section are submitted by the manufacturers.



35



36



37



38



39



40

You're Busted!

WHAT'S THIS? A FIGURE? HEY WHY NOT, IT'S WW2 AFTER ALL...

Okay, you may be wondering how your illustrious editor allowed this non-vehicle article into your precious magazine. Well, aside from the usual begging and groveling, I pointed out how the title of the mag was Military Miniatures in Review and how there ain't diddley squat in there about Military Miniatures. Well, after prodigious pugilistic fisticuffs, I pulled a Mike Tyson on him and he finally gave in (how's that ear healing, Pat?). Dang, the things some of us will do for our "art"! By the way, they lied, it don't taste like chicken at all...

All of my life I have felt conflicted about my two favorite things: models and art. I happily hacked away at plastic and resin, breathing in those lovely noxious fumes, but I kept feeling naggingly unfulfilled. At those times, I took to poetry readings and hanging out in coffee houses discussing philosophy with other equally unbathed people. But then I would see those kits stashed away in my closet, begging to be freed from the confines of their colorful boxes, and it was back to the realm of IPMS meetings and hanging out with other model nerds. Besides, I told myself, I didn't really like living in old warehouses and I looked really lame in a beret.



Anyway, one day I was pushing putty on yet another military figure when that old "art" thing reared its ugly head again. What if I treated one of those figures to a more "artistic" approach? Hey, I could be an artist and a model geek at the same time! Wow, what a concept! After a couple of gallery openings (where I woke up the next morning lying on the gallery floor in unidentified puddles of fluid), I decided that this would be a great idea! Thus was born the bust you see here.

So I whipped on my beret, grabbed some parts and putty, and started happily applying my artistic ideas to a new bust. It is different, it is daring, it is "artistic" and I had to finish it real fast because the rent was coming due! Here, forthwith, is the tale of my travails...

Now that I've gotten this bust out of my system, I have gone back to the normal world of model nerd-dom. I am again happily hacking away at plastic and resin. I now go to meetings with model geeks and other malodorous behemoths, discussing the finer points of Sdkfz's, RAL colors, Mr. Mark Softer, Tami-gawas and Revellograms... Hey, WAIT A MINUTE! This is "normal"? Uh, where the hell did I put that stupid beret?

—Mike Good

1) Here the front of the tunic has been sculpted onto the pre-greased torso. Once this has hardened, it can be removed in one piece

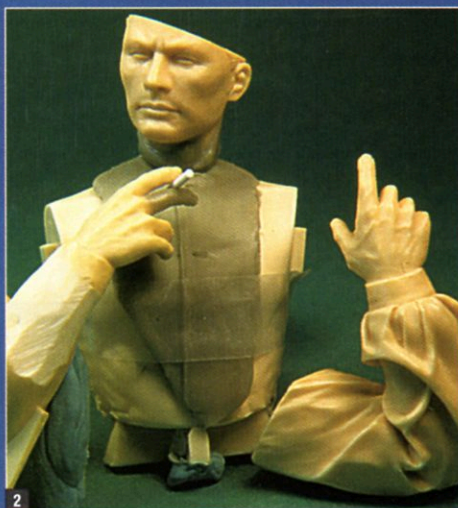
2) That gorgeous hand was swiped from a 1/9 scale Cossack, sculpted by mucho talented Korean modeler Ky Gap Paik. I only had to re-do one finger to make him holding the plastic rod cigarette. My main putty used on this project was Magic

Sculpt (that's the gray stuff in the photos)

3) Once the neck had been modeled, it was greased up and the collar was sculpted over this. Notice the plastic rods sticking out of his chest. I drilled holes straight through the tunic, into the torso. The rods were then inserted and glued only on the outside of the tunic. This creates convenient keys which allow me to remove and replace

the tunic as often as necessary without having to resort to glue to hold it in place.

4) The collar and lapels were made from putty which was rolled out flat and detailed before gluing it in place. Talcum powder was sprinkled onto a sheet of glass, and the putty was rolled out onto this bread dough style, once it had been allowed to set up for about 45 minutes or so.





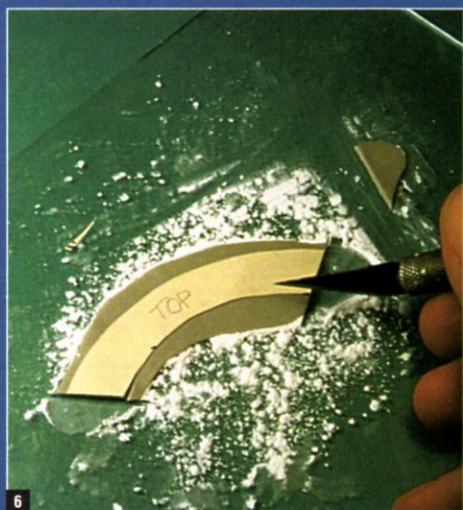
The seams and button holes were done with an X-acto knife and a sharp pin. The dividers were used to get consistent spacing on the button holes.

5) The lapels were glued in place with crazy glue and manipulated into shape while the putty was still soft. Timing is everything here. If you wait too long, or do it too soon, it won't work out and you will have to do it over. Here I am making



a paper template for the collar. This is all trial and error. I made several before I got one that fit.

6) The template was then used to cut the collar out of sheet putty. This must be done carefully to avoid distorting the putty. The best way to do this is to slice straight down into the putty, rather than "dragging" the blade around the pattern. Dragging will distort the edges of the soft



putty and spoil the part.

7) The collar is being glued onto the body with superglue. Note the coat cuff that has been added to the hand. This also was done with sheet putty. I could just as easily have sculpted it in place.

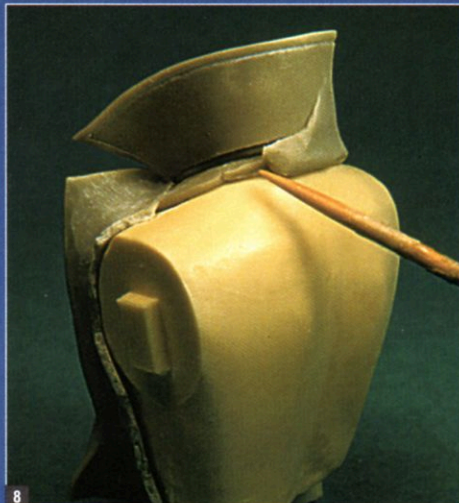
8) The collar needed to be blended into the body with additional putty (once the collar had hardened). I also needed to fill in behind the



lapels to allow for casting considerations.

9) The back of the figure was now filled in to make it look neater, and a lug was imbedded into this to accept the "pedestal" stand.

10) The stand was built on a skeleton made from sheet plastic and wire. The wire was inserted into a blob of putty stuck onto the greased mounting lug. Once this hardened, the wire was



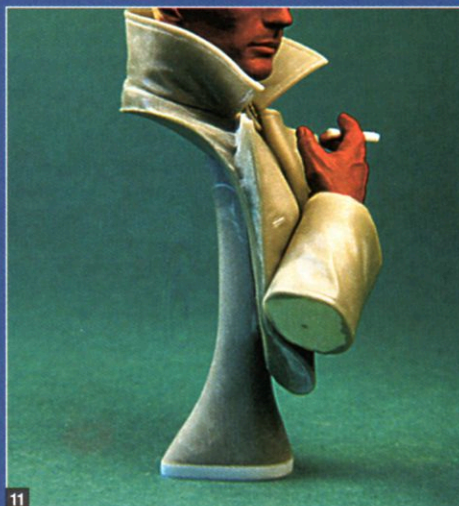
bent until the figure was at the desired angle.

11) The final step was filling in the remaining section of the stand and sanding it smooth once it had hardened. Viola! 'Tis done!

12) The face was brush painted with Testor enamels. The tunic, hat and coat were painted with Humbrol paints and an air brush. Additional highlights and shadows were then

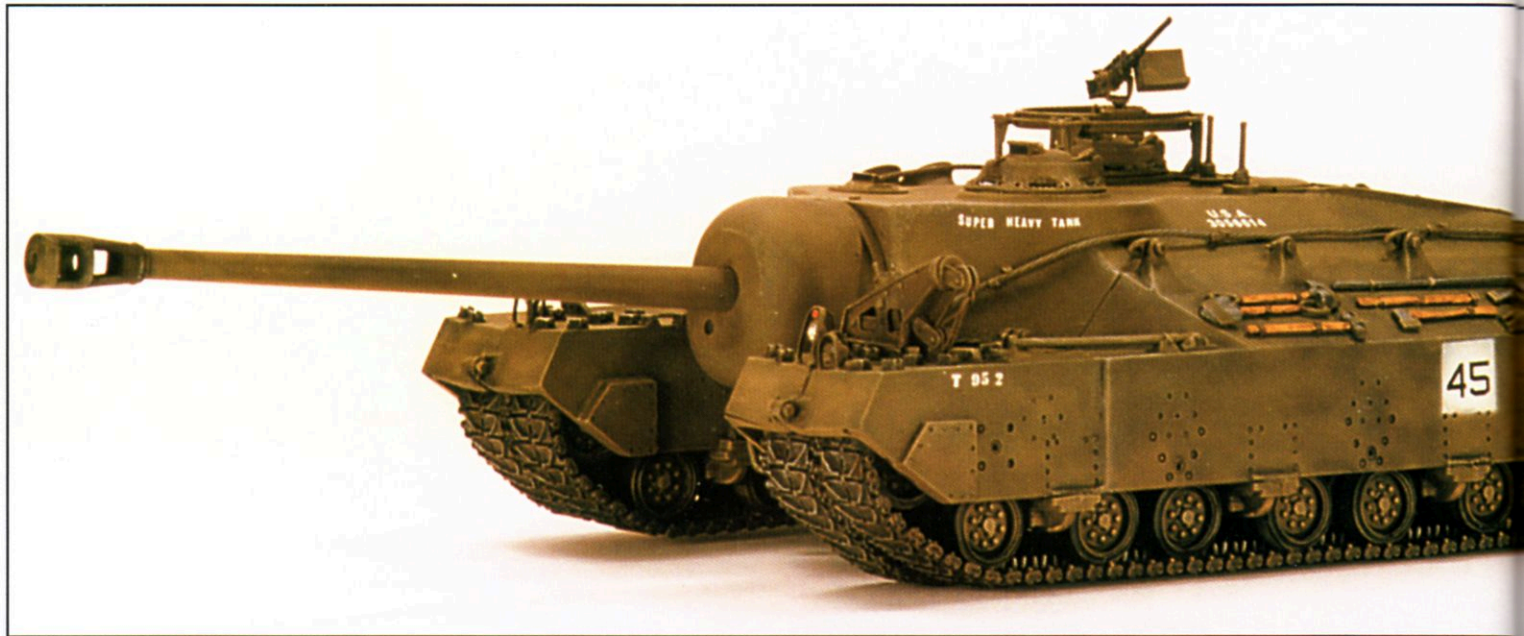


added to these areas with the paint brush. The satin finish of the leather coat was achieved by mixing a bit of Humbrol 33 Matte Black with Humbrol 85 Satin Black. Applying this with an airbrush ensures an even finish. The detail painting was done with a 000 Windsor Newton series 7 paint brush. These babies are expensive, but I wouldn't paint a figure without 'em!



T-28 alias T-95

OR WHAT IS THE BASTARD LOVE CHILD OF A SHERMAN AND A LOCOMOTIVE?



Surprise, surprise, surprise. That was this geek boy's reaction when I discovered this little beauty on my porch. The reason it was on my porch? It was too freaking big to fit in the mailbox. T-28 SUPER HEAVY TANK. 100 plus scale tons brought to us courtesy of those heavy tank freakazoids at Accurate Armour. This is the latest and greatest release in their ever expanding line of heavy tanks, and in this dude's biased opinion, "about time." This little gem went straight to the bench, where huge plumes of resin dust were produced post haste. Someone let me know when these guys run out of steam. VAROOM!

When I heard A/A was going to release this kit, I was, how you say, "chawmpin at the bit." All kidding aside, this kit rocks baby! This is obviously one of my favorites and I have harbored grand fantasies of scratch building it at some point. No need, A/A has finally done it and we the geeks only have to build it. If you have any interest in this subject, I can only say, "buy one."

Being an experimental tank, there isn't much of a tale to tell, so here it goes. America always had a sideline interest in heavy tanks, with many designs being tried and tested prior to and during WW2. The heavies were not a priority on the Army's agenda at the outbreak of the war, but many of the lessons learned helped in the development of medium and light tanks. The appearance of German and Soviet heavy tanks really got the brass re-thinking their position on the whole heavy tank concept. So in 1943, development of a super heavy tank was started with the intention of using it to punch holes in heavy fortifications, such as the Atlantic wall and

the Siegfried line.

The excellent 105mm T-5E1 gun, which had tremendous concrete cracking power, was the chosen weapon. The main gun was to be mounted on a turretless chassis with frontal armor up to 8 inches thick. The vehicle was to include electric drive, similar to the T-23 medium tank. Originally it was determined that 25 of these brutes would be produced, with delivery in 1 year. Pretty aggressive eh?

What evolved from all this was a mutated cross between the Sherman E-8 and a Pershing on steroids. To support the weight, 4 track sets with HVSS suspension were ingeniously utilized, allowing the outer sets to be removed for transport. The Pershing's Ford GAF V-8 was coupled to a transmission which gave the T-28 a top speed of 7 MPH at 2,600 rpm. All I can think of here is the Wicked Witch of the West furiously pumping her legs down a dusty Kansas road and getting nowhere fast. "I'll get you my pretty." In addition, the frontal armor was increased to 12 inches. Anzio Annie? Forget about it.

Needless to say, the T-28 wasn't ready in a year. With the end of the war, the original order was reduced from 25 to 5 and only 2 were produced by the Pacific Car and Foundry company (also known for producing the ever so modest sized Dragon Wagon). Being that this was the only assault gun produced by the U.S., a controversy ensued regarding the vehicle's classification. In March 1945 the T-28 was renamed Motor Gun Carriage T-95 being that it did not have a turret. The artillery had spoken. Not fulfilling the criteria of either a tank or self propelled artillery piece, the T-95 was renamed again in June 1946, Super Heavy Tank T-28. I would imagine either name would be correct, depending

on what side of the fence you're on. Politics?

My theory is only 2 were produced to appease both factions. Prototype #1 went to Aberdeen and prototype #2 went to Fort Knox. Number two is still there on display and it is what the kit undoubtedly is based on. An official government type friend of mine (Fred, "the Duke of Hooter's," Schwartz) told me that the Knox T-28 was found by some slappys on maneuvers after it had been lost in the back 40 for some 30 years. How do you lose a 100-ton tank? Fact or fiction? You decide.

First impressions

Like I said, the box is big. Everything here is typical A/A, with all of the goods being meticulously packed. I was a little surprised how light the box was compared to other A/A kits. This is due to A/A thoughtfully casting the road wheels in resin, rather than their traditional white metal. This cut out a lot of weight, which will really save your wrists when it comes time to paint. Did I mention there are 64 road wheels? Have fun...

I'm not going to kid you folks, there are a ton of parts. It took me one night to sort and inventory them all. Included is a bonanza of finely cast gray and green resin, white metal, a length of fine solder, string and some of that wonderful A/A heavy duty tow cable. Cool.

Also included is a small fret of photo-etch to take care of the brush guards and tow cable tie downs. On the down side: no decals.

The instructions are a mixture of in progress photos and a comprehensive verbal blow-by-blow. Option-wise, you can either build the vehicle complete or in various stages of transport mode, including

sponsons in tow. With the release of the Tamiya DW, my dreams of an Aberdeen dio are at hand. Whatever you decide, be sure to read the instructions.

Operation suspension

This, kiddies, is where you're going to spend most of your time. Did I say there are 64 road wheels? If building a complete vehicle, you probably can toss half the suspension in the spares box. To me this is sacrilegious, so I did it the hard way. Can't see it, but it's there. We're talking 2 Shermans worth of bogie trucks, 16 in all. A/A did a good job in capturing the look and provided an ample surface

for mounting. Best advice here is to set up a production line and keep going. Getting them all to set flat is another matter altogether. Fortunately, the white metal suspension arms are somewhat bendable, so you can tweak them a little once they are mounted. That's my story. I'm stickin' to it.

The remainder of the suspension is straight forward, but time consuming. The Pershing T-66 type track is a real highlight. The tracks are link and length and are absolutely gorgeous and user friendly. A/A has provided 2 sets cast in opposite directions so the outside detail is left intact. If you look closely you can actually see the bushings. Wow! If they are made available, these tracks would be a neat little after market item for

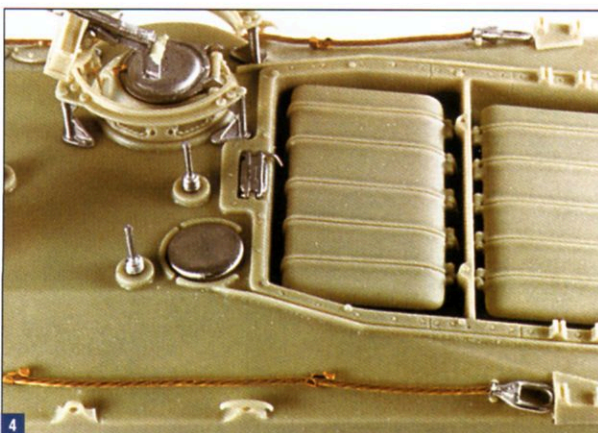
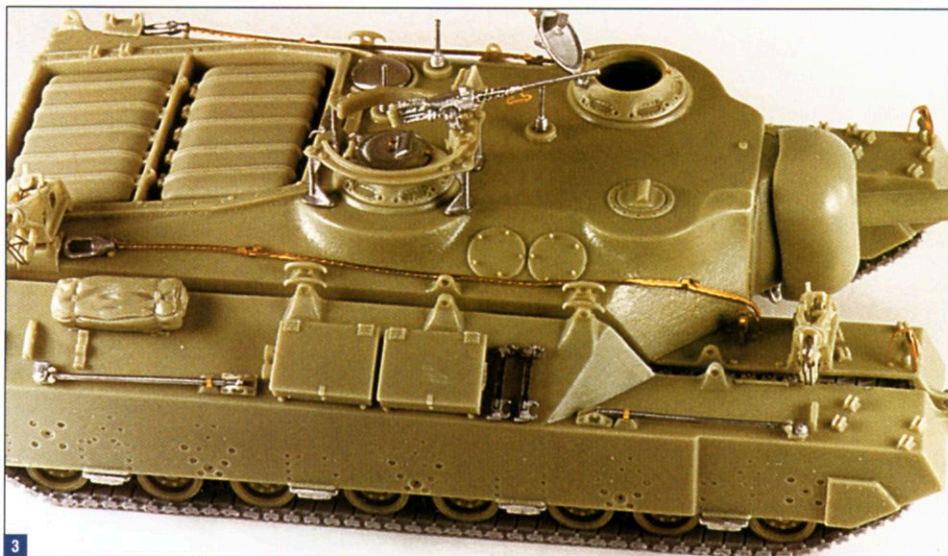
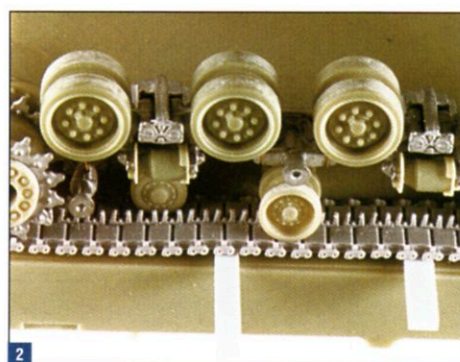
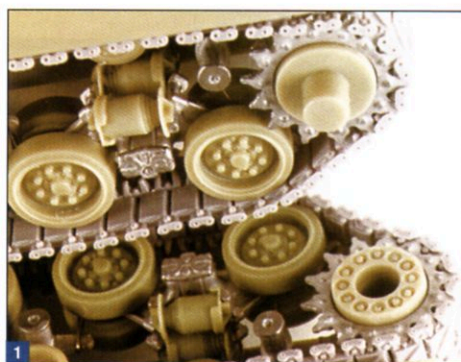
any DML HVSS Sherman or Pershing. It sure would save time.

Let's build that body

Before mounting all that suspension you should assemble the body, which consists of a top, bottom and 2 sides. A little work with the file will yield a very good fit. A little filler was required in the front where the top meets the sides. No big deal. It's probably a good idea to leave the rear engine hatches off until after painting so you have some place to grab while you're working. While you're at it, you can assemble the main gun and toss it aside as well. Don't worry, it fits perfectly.

The most challenging part of the kit is mounting the outboard sponsons. A few dry runs and some sanding will pay off. It also is a good idea to drill out the holes in the mounting lugs, 6 sets per side, before gluing. Try and drill them in-line, if you can. Next comes the fun part, the mounting of all the retaining pins, which on the real thing must be about 3 to 4 inches in diameter. The pins consist of an inner and an outer and are longer than needed, so you can cut them to fit. I inserted all the outers and cut the inners down. Beware of tweezer launch.

A word on how this thing worked is probably in order here. The massive sponsons were held in place by the massive pins. When removing the sponsons in the field, the pins would be removed from one side and the little cranes would be used to lift them enough to loosen them. The stay legs would be deployed, which kept the whole thing from tipping over. The driver then would reverse the vehicle and reposition the opposite side right next to the removed sponson where the cranes were relocated and the process was repeated. The sponsons were



1. This shot shows how the two drive sprockets link together. There's two Sherman's worth of bogies here. 2. The tracks can be temporarily wedged to ensure they make contact with the bogies. 3, 4. Overall shots of the beast before painting show off the various white metal and brass parts.

want to look into replacing them with some fine model ship chain. As you can see, there are quite a few possibilities with this kit and the addition of a few detail items is well within the abilities of most modelers.

Paint and markings

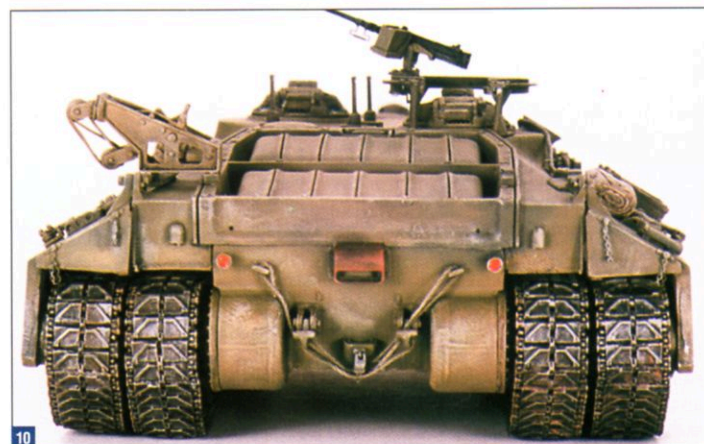
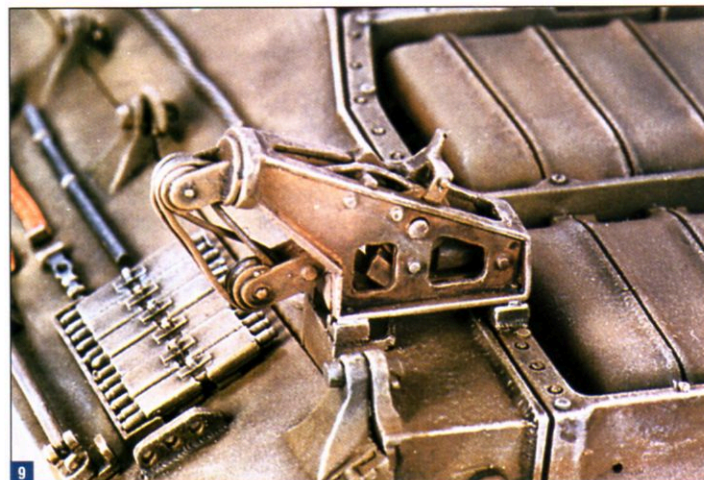
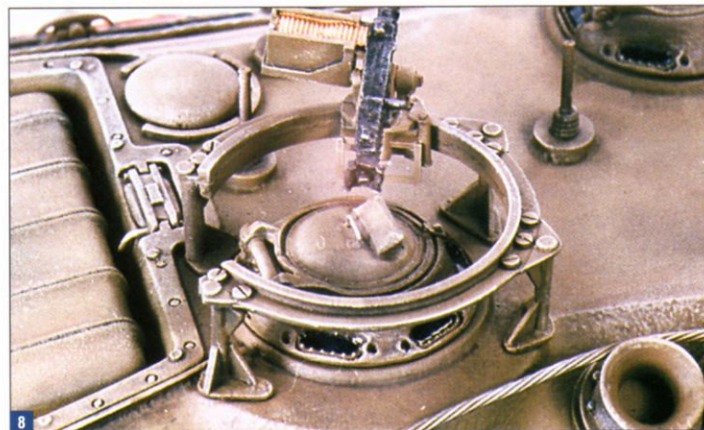
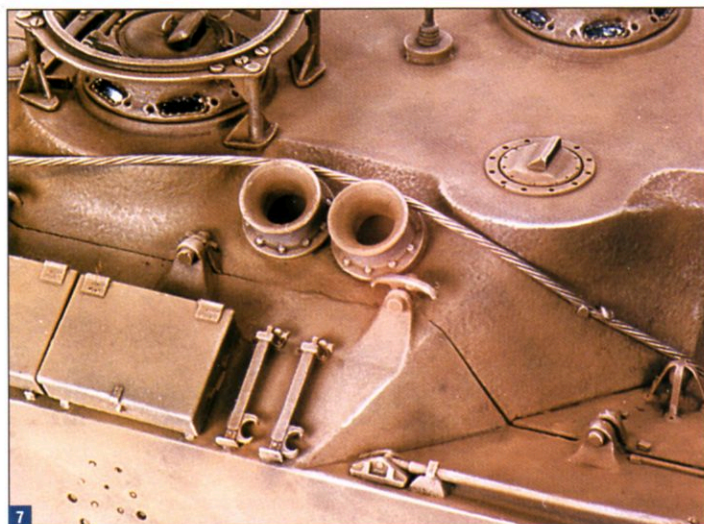
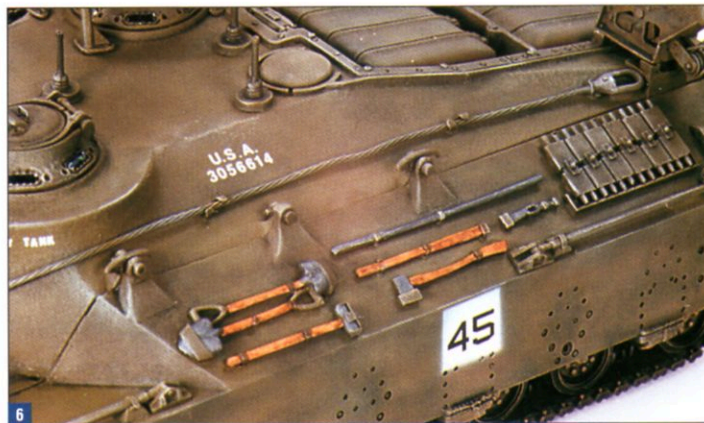
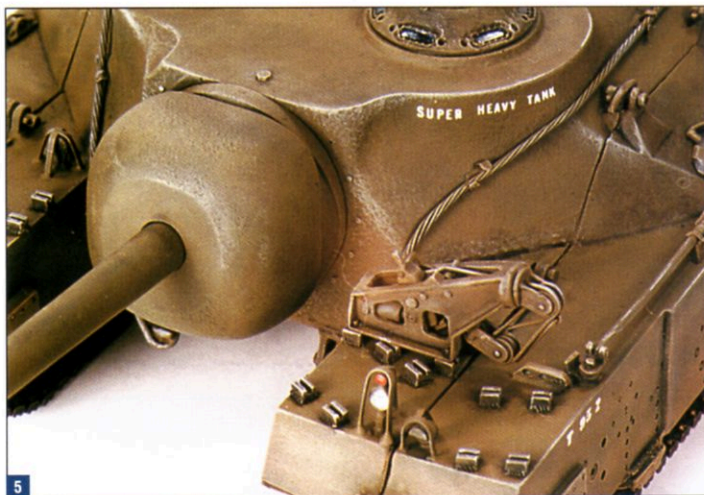
The model was primed using Armory white. After it dried, I sprayed the entire thing Tamiya flat black. Tamiya light earth was then over sprayed onto the suspension and tracks. Testors olive drab was then shot, allowing some of the black base coat to show through. Being that this is a test vehicle, weathering was kept to a minimum. A light wash of raw umber and black oil paint, followed by drybrushing with a series of lighter shades of olive drab, got the details a-poppin'. Worn metal surfaces were created using S&J metalizing powder. I like to use the little applicators from a company called Microbrush. These basically are tiny Q-tips which are used to brush the powder on. I realize this is airplane stuff, but it works great.

The call signs #45 were scrounged from the decal box and the white squares were sprayed using a mask cut from thin plastic card. The rest of the markings are dry transfers. "Super heavy tank" should be in yellow, but try finding yellow dry transfers. At least I got the tracks on right...

coupled together and a tow harness was attached to the vehicle. Braking for the sponsons was supplied via large brake drums and ropes attached to the rear. A group of guys would walk behind the trailer, yanking and pulling as required. Pretty scary. The whole process was said to take around 2.5 hours with an experienced crew.

Detail tips

Once you get to this point, you're pretty much home free. The headlights need to be drilled out to accept MV lenses, #116. The .50 cal in my example was a little rough. I would suggest replacing it with one from Collectors Brass or Tamiya. The tools are white metal and look O.K. when painted. With all of the U.S. stuff being released these days, it would be no problem to replace them with plastic detailed with P/E retainers. I used the etched chains that were supplied, which aren't that bad. These chains were used to retain the T-pins at the rear. You may



5. The left front end. I used MV Lenses (#116) on the headlights. The etched light guards throughout are supplied with the kit. 6. The tool suite on the left side. AA's white metal tools are nice. 7. The track tensioning tools on the right side. I wouldn't want that job! 8. The .50 cal roof mount. I felt the AA MG looked a little rough. Again, easily replaced if you wish. 9. One of two cranes used for lifting off the massive side skirts. 10. Siegfried line, here I come!

Conclusion

I really enjoyed this kit. A/A keeps making their kits easier to build, so there's no risk to the consumer getting stuck with an un-buildable box of aggravation. This kit would make an interesting addition to any display case, and with a few added details one easily could yield a show winner. With a sticker price of around \$170.00, some may be a little hesitant to throw down the green-backs. But consider what you get. Everything is included in the box and the quality and the level of detail is definitely worth the price of admission. Keep 'em coming boys. 

—Nick Vanston

MMiR RECCE

Accurate Armour American T28 Superheavy Tank. Kit number K98. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested UK retail £127.50. If this kit is purchased outside the UK, expect to pay £108.50 or about \$170.00 plus appropriate shipping.

References

Firepower. A History of the American Heavy Tank by R.P. Hunicutt, 1992, ISBN 0 8914 1462 2. This is the whole story right here. Terrific and numerous photos, plus drawings. Admittedly, it's very expensive, but if U.S. heavy oddities are your bag, this is the place to be.

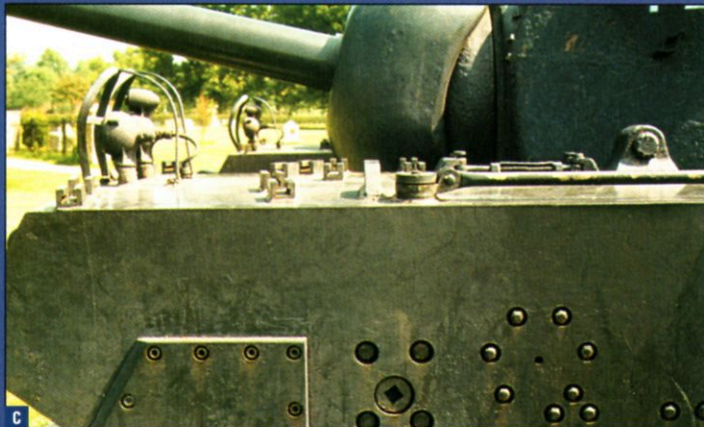
Profile AFV Weapons 41, M103 Heavy Tank + M41 Light tank (Walker Bulldog) by Colonel Robert J. Icks, Profile Publications, 1972. Long since out of print, it does contain a few photos, including a smashing cover shot.



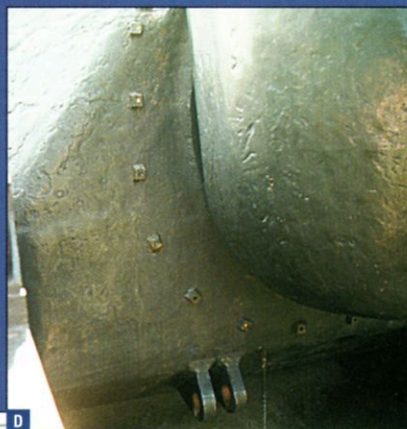
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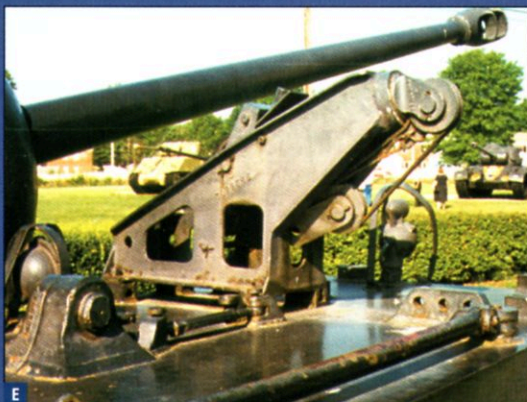


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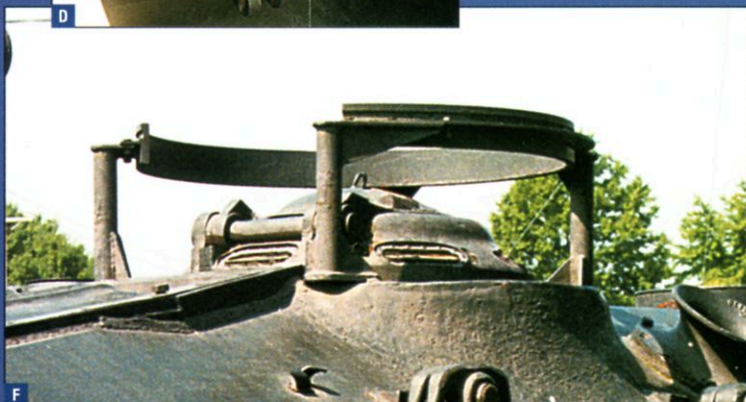


D

A. This is the one surviving example of the T28. It sits in front of the Patton Museum at Ft. Knox. It's in remarkably good shape. B. The right front fender area. Note the huge lugs for joining the skirts. C. The left front fender area showing the bolt and screw detail on the skirt. Check out the wire leads to the front lights. D. A close-up of the area around the front mantlet. The bolts are to attach a cover for the mantlet. E. The forward skirt crane mount. Note the casting numbers



E



F



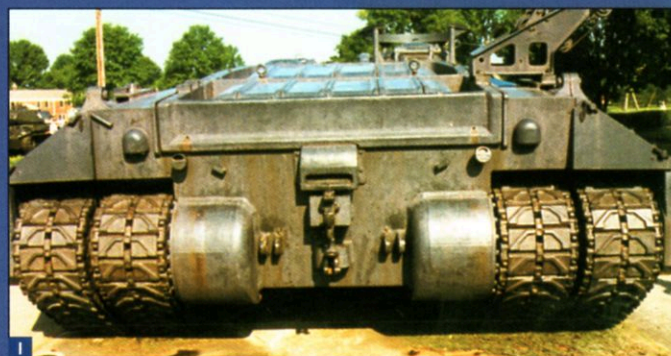
G



H

on the inside face of the crane. F. A close-up of the .50 cal ring mount on the roof. This is unique among US tanks from WW2. Most other designs did not give the commander this kind of access. It's influence on post-war armor such as the

M48 is interesting. G. The right rear of the vehicle. The tank's excellent condition is evident here. Note that the thin metal stowage boxes on the side show little or no sign of rust. H. The same area on the opposite side. These were the only spare links for all the runs on the tank... The rod mounted below the links was a stay rod used to prevent the sponson from tipping over during installation. I. View from the rear. This shows just how wide this vehicle really was. The use of the outside sponson was another design feature that was completely unique to the T-28.



I

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